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**EXAMINING SOCIAL CLASS AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG  
HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES**

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**EXAMINING SOCIAL CLASS AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS AMONG  
HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES**

**by**

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**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2012**

## **Dedication**

To my children: Edmond Gabriel Clark and Isabelle Catherine Clark. You taught me and  
continue to teach me patience, discipline, laughter and unconditional love.

We have been on this journey together and "mummy" loves you both so much.

To my parents: Dr. Menes and Francoise (Dube) Pierre-Pierre, for your unconditional  
love and support and for giving me Haiti at a time in my life when I could still now  
remember it.

*"Haiti, cette perle des mains de Dieu tombee"*

## **Acknowledgements**

I am done. I made what seemed at one point in my life impossible, possible. However nothing is ever complete without other entities, spiritual and physical. I know my letters to God were heard, they always are...thank you. To all those who agreed to include a piece of my life into theirs, thank you. I was humbled in this process, for my research participants gave of their time, their insight, their challenges, and their hopes to answer mine. I continue to be reminded that immigrants are torn between two worlds, one of familiarity and one of hope. There is no way to thank each of you individually; however I hope my words have honored yours.

First and foremost I want to thank those individuals who connected me to my participants, and made this all possible. To Dr. Jacqueline and Serge Prevost, words cannot be expressed on paper that would honor your support in my research and in me. I extend a world of gratitude to Marleine Bastien, Executive Director of Haitian Women of Miami, Inc. and Aline B. Francois and all the agency personnel who opened their space and gave of their time throughout the research process. Thank you for setting up rooms, translating words, printing my documents, and sharing your invaluable perspectives and commitment to assisting the Haitian community. Your support of my research, your insight and friendship only confirmed what I knew all along; there is a wonderfully supportive Haitian community. It is strong and progressing. Please know that you are never a thought away. I also want to thank Miami –Dade County Public Schools for supporting my research.

To my circle of friends and family, who made me realize that while life did not always remain constant for me, they did. In Toronto, Cheryl, my confident, my soul protector, supporter, my life is complete because I have you. In all my tribulations, and I had many, and my triumphs you were always here, telling me, I am ok and it will be ok and it is ok. A special thanks to Marvyn (Ella, Lena) too, for always keeping me encouraged, and providing incredible life insight and laughter.

In Canada, Francoise (Bebe) Pierre-Pierre (Daphne Cloutier), the most wonderful sister in the world, I was strong because you were stronger. I am prouder of you each second of every day. I love you so very much. To my friend Kelly Pratt (Yomi, Tembi and Lanare), for giving me words of encouragement, love, laughter and invaluable insight. To Oncle Robert and Tante Cathy, you are always in my corner, and giving of your time, insight and love. In Massachusetts, Menes and Leigh Ann Pierre-Pierre (Erica, Christian, Johnny, Michael and Andrew), my brother and wonderful sister in law, you are always there, making my life a little easier, and giving my children a memorable childhood, our Disney, Cottage, and Myrtle Beach trips were a Godsend, as were the great hotel accommodations along my many journeys to Canada and Texas. I know I don't thank you enough, but every day I thank and love you for being part of my life. In Miami, I thank Yanic Jean –Jacques for your friendship, shelter, Haitian food, laughter, going out nights, the beach, and on-going presence throughout this journey.

In Savannah, I want to thank Dr. April Gentry, for words of wisdom, kindness, support, understanding and regular reality checks. To Janice Powell, for your never ending presence, your supportive gatherings, your insight and overall love. To Lisa McFarland (David), Florence and Curt Bryant (Claire, Morgan, Kevin), JoAnn G. Fernandez (Eliana), and Chiquita Burke (Phillip), I thank each of you for your endearing friendships and for grounding me and keeping me normal through movie nights, dinner outings, beach days, great conversations, children swaps and lots of laughter. To Dick Haun (my wonderful neighbor), you are so thoughtful.

A most very special thanks to Dr. Beverly Watkins, I would not be here, have accomplished so much in my career had it not been for your encouragement, unconditional support, your wisdom, and your keen ability to always see further than I could possibly see. I love you and thank you so much. I also want to thank the Savannah State University community. And finally Dr. Wright, thank you for being an encouraging presence, and for admiring Haiti and its people, as much as I do.

To my summer 2002 cohort Sal Montana, Angela Ausbrook, Stephen Cooper, Amy Boelk, Jean Brooks, Yvonne Leal, Caroline Nixon-Garcia and the 2003 cohort of Pamela Malone and Danielle Parrish. Your friendship made my separation from Edmond and Isabelle bearable. You were each so wonderful and supportive, and shared in one of the happiest times in my life. I keep each of you close in thought and good wishes.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that every now and then, someone comes in your life and tells you it is not possible. In their good intention, YOU become responsible for making the impossible possible. I thank you Soldier, for this life lesson. I made it through and achieved, despite, I achieved.

I am so thankful to Dr. Padilla and my committee members, Dr. Fong, Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Pomeroy and Dr. White. Dr. Padilla, in you I found a kindred spirit, you gave me the strength to challenge myself, and you supported me, questioned me, pushed me, re-directed me and encouraged me to give my best. I was humbled by your patience, and for not giving up on me. I thank you for 10 incredible years and I look forward to many more. I had the pleasure of taking courses with both Dr. Fong and Gilbert, and your insight, global perspective, and encouragement was invaluable in this most rewarding endeavor. Dr. Pomeroy, you were a quiet presence, however your feedback, and knowledge of Haitian culture greatly assisted me in this process. And finally Dr. White, your continued words of encouragement, grounded me in this process, and I thank you for your support. Dr. Streeter and Dr. Schwab, I thank you both for your support in this long and arduous process. You made my time at UT a most memorable experience.



# **EXAMINING SOCIAL CLASS AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES**

Anne Martine Pierre-Pierre, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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Haitians in the United States represent the fourth largest immigrant population from the Caribbean. As in the case of many immigrant populations, Haitian immigrant adaptation has been challenged by social, political and economic factors, and as a result they have had to seek legal, health, and social services. According to the literature, help-seeking behaviors among Haitian immigrants have been associated with traditional indices of socioeconomic status, namely education, occupation, or income. This study takes a more in-depth look at the influence of social class by approaching it as cultural construct in the context of historical patterns of Haitian immigrant incorporation. Most Haitians arrived during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in four successive waves, the 1957, 1970, 1980 and 1991 wave. Each of these waves of Haitian immigration represented a distinct context of departure and social class composition.

A qualitative approach was used to obtain rich information on the role of help-seeking in the immigration and incorporation experience of Haitians from the perspective of immigrants who arrived during the four distinct waves of immigration. Individual and

focused group interviews were conducted in English, Creole, and French with a purposive and snowball sample of 43 Haitian immigrants currently living in south Florida. Using a grounded theory approach, the analysis generated six categories related to the Haitian immigrant experience: orientation at time of arrival, establishment of social connections, issues of trust, generational effects, cultural constructs of social class, and perspectives on the help-seeking experience.

Key findings emerged that identified the importance of social connections in Haitian help-seeking behaviors in the context of a complex Haitian social class construct imbedded in historical, political, and economic positioning. Specifically, across all immigration waves, regardless of social background—from the highly educated doctor who arrived in the 1950s to the rural peasant who arrived in the 1990s—Haitian immigrants identified an individual of Haitian descent residing in the United States on whom they relied for assistance in obtaining resources. This system of social connections reflected the social constructs of class existing in Haiti and remained a significant factor in Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behaviors during resettlement.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction and Problem Statement: Understanding Help-Seeking Behavior**

According to the 2001 Census, Haitian immigrants have become the third largest ethnic immigrant population in the United States since 1996 and one of the largest Black immigrant populations (Census, 2000; Nicholas, DeSilva, Subrebst, Breland-Noble, Gonzalez-Eastep, Manning, Prosper & Prater, 2007). Most Haitians arrived in the United States during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in four successive waves. They include the 1957 wave, the 1970 wave, the 1980 wave and the 1991 wave. Each wave represents a distinct context of departure and social class composition. Like many immigrant populations, Haitian immigrant adaptation in the United States has been challenged by social, political and economic factors. As a result they have had to seek legal, health, and social services. The ability of immigrants to seek resources and the factors which influence their decision to seek them become as significant during resettlement as does the availability of these resources.

Several studies (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Bastien, 1995; Bronstein & Kelly, 1998; Latta & Goodman, 2005; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005; Kretsedemas, 2006) examine Haitian help-seeking behaviors in the United States, in large part this research focused on the experiences of Haitian immigrants who arrived during the more recent and largest waves of Haitian immigration (1980s and 1990s). Periods of immigration that proved to be particularly challenging and at times hostile towards Haitian immigrants as these immigration periods were disproportionately represented by undocumented rural

Haitians, with limited education, lack of familiarity with western culture and little access to modern resources in Haiti.

A review of empirical literature indicates that less is known about Haitian immigrants from the earlier waves of immigration (1957 and 1970), the majority of who legally immigrated to the United States. In fact, these Haitian immigrants tended to be better educated and wealthier urban migrants who possessed a familiarity with western culture. Many immigrated to the northeastern parts of the United States, specifically New York and Boston. Thus, based on the historical context of Haitian immigration and the group composition there is reason to believe that help-seeking behaviors among those who immigrated in the 1950s and early 1970s are likely to be different than that of Haitian immigrants from the latter two waves.

Table 1 Wave of Immigration and Age Composition

Haitian Immigration Waves by Period of Immigration	Age range at time of departure	Age range at time of research	Preferred language of Communication
1 (1957-1969)	20-34	66-80	Creole, English, French, strong command of French
2 (1970- 1979)	20-44	50-76	Creole, English, and some French
3 (1980- 1989)	20-34	46-76	Creole, English mostly Creole
4 (1991- 1995)	20-34	44-61	Creole, English mostly Creole

According to earlier studies, a majority of Haitian immigrants from the latter two waves of Haitian immigration underutilized resources (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Bastien, 1995; Bronstein & Kelly, 1998; Latta & Goodman, 2005; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005; Kretsedemas, 2006). Their underutilization of resources is linked to key factors as immigration status, lack of access to health insurance, lack of familiarity with available resources, and linguistic and cultural barriers. According to these studies, many Haitian

immigrants arrive in the United States seeking refuge from Haiti's political and economic instability. Although some Haitian immigrants arrive with a legal immigration status, a large portion of them do not, and are then confronted by a U.S. immigration system unwilling to grant them refugee status. Instead, they are treated as economic migrants and often summarily returned to Haiti.

Of those who remain in the United States, many are detained as they await a possible asylum hearing, while others remain at large as undocumented immigrants. And as with most undocumented immigrants, they are disentitled to many government resettlement services, such as the refugee resettlement programs. In addition, many Haitian immigrants' lack of advanced education and inability to speak English relegates them to secondary labor markets. These labor markets offer limited pay and health coverage and maintain many Haitian immigrants in a state of poverty.

Further compounding their underutilization of resources is Haitian immigrants' pervasive distrust of formal institutions. This sense of distrust is often the result of Haitian immigrants own experience with the Haitian government and government entities. As a result, most Haitian immigrants turn to the Haitian family unit and larger kinship network as the primary source of help (Bastien, 1995).

However, the factors discussed in these studies tend to reflect the challenges faced by Haitians from the latter two waves of Haitian immigration, many of whom represent a particular Haitian social class composition. These factors may not necessarily represent the challenges faced by Haitian immigrants who arrived during the earlier Haitian immigration waves and/or who represent a higher social class standing.

Although Haiti is considered the least economically developed country in the Western Hemisphere, it has a highly stratified society and life experiences and the consequent behaviors vary drastically according to Haitian social structure. The Haitian social structure is a combination of family name and comportment, race, skin color, language, educational attainment and residential background. Membership is “determined more by birth than personal or economic achievements” (Simpson, 1948, p. 640).

According to the literature (Charles, 2006; Stepick, Stepick & Kretsedemas, 2001; Zephir, 2004), the opportunities afforded to certain groups of Haitian immigrants and the absence of support for others upon their arrival in the United States reflect social class differences and treatment rooted in Haitian social structure. In the United States, it is the Haitian social structure and not that of the U.S. which provides a frame of reference for acceptable ideologies and behaviors among Haitian immigrants. This literature suggests that social class has a strong cultural context for Haitian immigrants.

However, social class as a cultural construct has rarely been discussed in studies on immigrant help-seeking behavior. Instead socioeconomic status SES is offered as an approximate variable for social class, where it is commonly defined by indices of education, occupation and income. Although these indices do place individuals in a “hierarchical framework or stratification” (Lui, 2004, p. 99), this stratification system is limited and fails to explain social class differences which occur within a cultural context (Lui, 2004). By considering the cultural construct of social class, this study moves beyond the traditional indices of SES, education, occupation and income, to determine whether culturally specific factors may be as, if not more significant in influencing immigrant help-seeking behaviors.

The influence of SES is discussed in several immigrant help-seeking studies (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Lui, 2004; Marshall, Urrutia-Rojos, Soto Mas & Coggin, 2005; St-Jean & Crandall, 2005). For example, Albertini and Barsky (2003) identified lower SES based on income, as a barrier to healthcare among Haitian immigrants. In a study by Marshall and his collaborators (2005) lower income and education levels were identified as factors that impacted undocumented Mexican women's health coverage and access to health providers. Two previous studies have found SES, immigration status and English proficiency to be important determinants of help-seeking behavior among Mexican and Haitian immigrant populations (Marshall et al., 2005; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005).

The influence of SES on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior is also discussed in several studies (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Stepick, Stepick & Kretsedemas, 2001; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005). However, social class as a cultural construct that moves beyond the common indices of SES to include comportment, family name, skin tone and language has not been the focus of any study on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior in the United States. And yet, social class as defined by Haitian culture is considered a key determinant in all aspects of Haitian life including political, economic and occupational opportunities, family, and religious life (Simpson, 1948, Stepick et al., 2001) "unlike the U.S. where racial and ethnic differences are often noted: in Haiti everyone is aware of class" (Stepick et al., 2001, p.16).

The purpose of this study is to examine social class as a cultural construct, to see whether it provides a broader explanation on Haitian immigrants' decision and ability to seek resources, the types of resources and service providers sought, or the expectations of

resources and service provision. For example, if Haitian social class is a cultural construct that is clearly understood by Haitian immigrants, then what role, if any does it play in their help-seeking behaviors. Given the many factors which culturally define Haitian social class, which one, if any is more influential on help-seeking behaviors? How has membership in a social class impacted Haitian immigrants' behaviors when seeking social, health, mental health resources? It is to answer questions such as these that the study will explore the influence of social class as a cultural construct on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behaviors. Understanding Haitian immigrants' cultural subtleties and social context in relation to social class membership and help-seeking behaviors will provide knowledge and tools necessary for increasing effective social work practice with this population.

### Background of Study

Help-seeking behaviors among various ethnic immigrant populations have been widely studied in the United States (Hamilton, Hummer, You & Padilla, 2006; Lipsky, Caetano, Field, & Larkin, 2006; Martinez & Carter-Pokras, 2006; Portes, Kyle & Eaton, 1992) and abroad (Gage & Calixte, 2006; Shor, 2007; Soskolne, Auslander & Ben-Shahar, 2005; Youssef & Deanne, 2006) to address their resettlement needs. The focus of these studies has primarily been in the context of health and mental health care utilization related to issues of mental and physical health, as well as domestic violence, and social well-being. These studies have identified several salient factors which impact immigrant help-seeking behaviors including language proficiency (Martinez & Carter-Pokras, 2006), knowledge of available resources (Soskolne, Auslander & Ben-Shahar, 2006; Youssef & Deanne, 2006), immigration status (Latta & Goodman, 2005; Lipsky et al.,

2006), socioeconomic status (Hamilton et al., 2006), pre-migration experience (Portes et al., 1992; Shor, 2007), and lack of health insurance (Green, Freund, Posner & David 2005; St. Jean & Crandall, 2005) and cultural beliefs (Ngo-Metzer et al., 2007, Youssef & Deanne, 2006).

Empirical literature on Haitian immigrant help-seeking behavior has focused on utilization of health and mental services and has come mostly from sociological, medical and anthropological literatures (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Buchanan, 1980; Holcomb, Parsons, Giger & Davidhizar 1996; Lindor, 2001; Phelps & Johnson, 2004; Portes, 1986; Portes et al., 1992; Portes & Stepick, 1985; Santana & Dancy, 2000; Schantz, Charron & Folden, 2003; Stepick & Stepick, 2001; St. Jean & Crandall, 2005; Woart, 1997).

Findings of past studies indicate that language barriers (Kretsedemas, 2005), cultural beliefs (Desrosiers & St. Fleurose, 2002; Latta & Goodman, 2004), the stigma of AIDS (Metayer, Jean-Louis & Madison, 2004; Santana & Dancy, 2000), immigration and socioeconomic status (St. Jean & Crandall, 2005), treatment by service providers and organizations (DeSantis, Thomas & Sinnett, 1999; Holcomb et al, 1996; Lindor, 2001; Phelps & Johnson, 2004), all influence Haitian help-seeking behaviors. Language barriers and legal immigration status or lack thereof are key determinants across all studies on Haitian immigrant help-seeking behaviors.

In social work literature, Haitian immigrant help-seeking behaviors have been addressed from the perspective of social work practice (Bastien, 1995; Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Pierce & Elisme 1997, 2000). Other social work literature reports on the impact of Haitian immigration on the state of Florida's health and human services (McNeece, Falconer & Springer, 2002). Empirical research in social work has discussed help-

seeking behaviors in the context of utilization of school based resources (Bronstein & Kelly, 1998), access to U.S. health care (Ryan, Hawkins, Parker & Hawkins, 2004), Haitian women adaptation (Cedeno-Zamor, 1999), and the impact of social capital on economic adaptation (Potocky-Tripodi, 2004). Cedeno-Zamor (1999) identified language barriers, immigration status, marital status and education as barriers to utilizing resources in the context of adaptation for Haitian immigrant women. McNeece and colleagues (2002) compared the immigration of Cubans and Haitians and its fiscal impact on Florida's education, social services and criminal justice systems and found that Haitian immigrants were at a greater disadvantage than their Cuban counterparts. The report was based on Haitian and Cuban immigrants who arrived in the United States during the 1980s. These Haitian immigrants arrived in a climate that was not prepared to accept them as economic immigrants or political refugees. They were less educated, lacked employable skills and were considered economically depressed (McNeece et al., (2002). Bronstein and Kelly (1998) found that immigration status, language barriers and level of trust influenced Haitian immigrant parents' utilization of school based health services in Miami and Potocky-Tripodi (2004) discussed the impact of social capital on economic adaptation among various immigrant populations including Haitians where economic adaptation was defined by employment status, utilization of public assistance and earnings. In a study on Haitian immigrant access to U.S. health care, fear of deportation was found to be an impediment to Haitian immigrants' accessing U.S. health resources (Ryan et al., 2004).

These immigrant help-seeking studies have identified several factors which impact the help-seeking behaviors of immigrant populations and they include



immigration status, poverty, language proficiency, education, cultural beliefs, culturally sensitive service providers and presence of ethnic enclave in the United States. For Haitian immigrants, additional factors of race, religious beliefs, stigma of AIDS and the Creole language have also played a key role in their decision and ability to seek help.

Although a key determinant to help-seeking behaviors across all immigrant populations is immigration status, particularly for undocumented immigrants, cultural expectations and influences have also been shown to influence immigrants' ability to seek resources and include distrust for formal institutions, shame, stigma, need for privacy and religious precepts. In terms of Haitian immigrants these cultural factors include pride, need for privacy and the Haitian family's influence on Haitian immigrants decision to seek help (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Bastien, 1995).

#### Statement of the Problem

Even though existing help-seeking studies reflect the experiences of Haitian immigrants, the majority of findings are based on the experiences of Haitians who arrived during the third wave of Haitian immigration, after 1980 and whose primary U.S. destination was South Florida. Although many represented Haitians of a lower social class composition in Haiti, they came to symbolize all Haitian immigrants in the United States. The experience of these Haitian immigrants and the absence of support for their plight from the established Haitian community in the United States seem to represent historical class divisions which persist in Haiti and in the United States (Stepick et al., 2001).

Therefore, it may be important to take into account Haiti's social structure when examining Haitian immigrant help-seeking behaviors in the United States, a behavior

which may likely vary across various class divisions. Although Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behaviors are influenced by such factors as immigration status, language barriers, race, and education, their resettlement experiences are rooted in a cultural context deeply reflective of a strong culturally defined social class system in Haiti. And the influence of this cultural context on help-seeking behaviors may be better understood by examining social class as a cultural construct. Haitian immigrants leave a social, political and economic system primarily defined by class divisions only to enter a set of U.S. systems divided along the lines of race and skin color. In Haiti, social class and not skin color plays a primary role in determining the social hierarchy and securing access to those resources which ensure a better quality of life, food, shelter, education, and healthcare.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine whether social class as a culturally defined construct is a factor in the help-seeking behaviors of Haitian immigrants. For the purpose of this study, help-seeking behavior is defined as any communication regarding a problem or troubling event which engages an individual to seek help (Gourash, 1978). It is conceptualized as a strategy for coping with stressful life circumstances and results in action to seek resolution from a source, family, friends or social networks (Gourash, 1978). The study is also intended to further social workers' understanding of cultural subtleties and expectations as they relate to social class on the help-seeking behaviors of diverse immigrant populations. As Haitians continue their migration to the United States, and as Haitian communities expand, it will be important to broaden social workers' understanding of Haitian social class and how it may influence Haitian immigrants'

adaptation to the United States, and more specifically how Haitian immigrants' seek help in dealing with and coping with life stressors. Thus, this study will add to the existing research on immigrant help-seeking behaviors, particularly as it pertains to social work research and practice with Haitian immigrants.

In looking at social class as a cultural construct and the help-seeking behaviors of Haitian immigrants in the United States, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) Do cultural beliefs/perceptions about help-seeking of Haitian immigrants vary by period of immigration?
- 2) If those beliefs are not commonly held, what factors contribute to the discrepancies? If those beliefs are commonly held beliefs, how were they developed? How are they maintained in the United States?
- 3) Does social class play a significant role in Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior in Haiti, in the United States? If so, how?
- 4) Does social class play a significant role in Haitian immigrants' utilization of social resources? If so how?
- 5) How significant is the role of social class as a cultural construct on the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants compared to factors of language proficiency, sensitivity of service providers, immigration status, education and context of arrival?

In addition, the study also examines whether the U.S. government's response to the Haiti during the 2010 Haitian earthquake had an impact on the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants living in the United States. At the time of the

earthquake, the United States pledged millions of dollars in aid, provided military support to assist the Haitian government in its response to this human and environmental catastrophe, and gave temporary protective status (TPS) to undocumented Haitian immigrants living in the United States at the time of the Haitian earthquake.

To achieve the study's research objectives, a qualitative research methodology was employed. The methodology consisted of individual interviews and focus group with Haitian immigrants who arrived during the four largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States. Social class as a cultural construct and Haitian immigrant help-seeking behaviors were examined through the use of grounded theory. This research methodology allowed for a more detailed, and substantive insight and understanding of social class as a cultural construct and its meaning in Haitian help-seeking behaviors.

#### Relevance to Social Work

Most immigrants and refugees, particularly those arriving from developing countries leave their country of origin in search of economic stability, freedom from oppression and discrimination, and opportunities for and the protection of future generations (Doucet, 2005, Massey, 1998; Perusek, 1984). Haitian immigrants and refugees arrived in the United States seeking with the same intent and determination as other immigrant populations, seeking a better quality of life. However, Haitians initial migratory patterns did not reflect those of other Caribbean nations, whose main feature is international labor migration. Instead, Haiti's migratory patterns were reflected in rural to urban migration and subsequent migration to Cuba and the Dominican Republic (Perusek, 1984). It was not until the presidency of Francois Duvalier's that the largest

groups of Haitian immigrants sought to emigrate to the United States, and other nations like Canada, France and the Congo.

Like many immigrant populations, Haitian immigrants arrive in the United States with culturally determined beliefs and behaviors which influence their ability and/or willingness to seek help. These beliefs and behaviors are evident in language barriers, familiarity with western culture and available resources, religious beliefs, perception of mental and physical health, financial resources, education and treatment by service providers. Given that the experiences of immigrants are bound to social work on issues of social justice, human rights, humanitarian response, safety and economics (NASW Press, 2006-2009; Padilla, Shapiro, Fernandez-Castro & Faulkner, 2008), understanding their resettlement needs and the influence of culturally determined beliefs and behaviors is relevant to social work practice and research.

Furthermore, social workers are encouraged to continue familiarizing themselves with the realities of immigration and immigrant policies and how these policies impact the lives of immigrant population on such issues as eligibility and access to social services, underemployment, poverty, cultural barriers, domestic violence, health, mental health and social health. Social workers are educated to provide culturally competent services, to stand against policies which impede and unjustly target immigrant populations and to advocate for policies and services which protect immigrant human rights. The ability of social workers to serve the needs of immigrant populations successfully is contingent upon their understanding of the complexities of the immigrants' life and experiences which begin long before immigrants arrive on U.S. soil.

Haitian immigrants represent a very diverse population “divided by class, gender, color, generation, political and ideological persuasion, language, and region of origin” (Charles, 2006, p. 205) and their culture and social structure are significant factors in their life perspectives. Understanding the variations which exist within Haitian immigrant populations, particularly in the context of social class may help social workers achieve a better understanding of their clients’ needs and the competencies required to address them. This research is particularly relevant to social service providers in cities with large Haitian immigrant populations, like Miami, NYC, Boston and Chicago and the newer more rural communities like in the state of Delaware where Haitian immigrants have settled and where social workers will encounter Haitian immigrants in social services agencies, hospitals, schools, community health facilities and non-profit organizations.

#### Dissertation Outline in Perspective

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Chapter two discusses Haitian culture in perspective and the political, social, and economic conditions that influenced the four largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States. Included are a description of the Haitian communities in the United States and the historical development of Haitian social structure. In chapter 3, I reviewed empirical studies on help-seeking behaviors and immigrant populations in the United States and abroad, and reviewed studies on Haitian immigrants in the United States specifically. Included in this chapter is a description of the significant factors that influence the help-seeking behaviors of these various immigrant populations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of social class in the context of help-seeking studies.

Chapter 4 presents the research question, describes the qualitative research design, conceptual framework, the research protocol and data analysis procedures. Chapter 5 provides a description of the research participants according to their respective wave of Haitian immigration, 1957, 1970, 1980 and 1991. Chapter 6 discusses the five emerging themes from both focus groups and individual interviews, the participant's responses by themes, the table of categories followed by a detailed description of the themes, the results of the research questions and the researcher's perspective. Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion on the study's implications for social work, limitations of the study, considerations for social practice and policy, and future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Haitian Culture in Perspective**

Haiti's rich history emerged from its stance against French colonial rule. Haiti's achieved independence, left an indelible mark on its social, economic and political legacies. These legacies paved the way for the four largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States. This chapter allows for a better understanding of the four waves of immigration by providing an overview of Haiti's history under colonial rule and its current political, economic and social conditions. In addition it gives a detailed discussion of Haitian waves of immigration to the United States during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and includes a brief discussion on the context of departure from Haiti and arrival in the United States. This discussion is then followed by an overview of Haitian communities in the United States and Haitian immigrants' resettlement patterns. The chapter also describes Haitian culture and includes Haitian identity, family, language, and religious practices. The final section offers a historical context of Haitian social structure in Haiti and the United States.

#### **Historical and Social Context**

In 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived on the Island of Hispaniola site of the first Spanish colony in the Americas. At the time, an indigenous population called the Tainos inhabited the island. This population was destroyed by genocide and disease. Slaves were imported from Africa to replace the Tainos and work the sugar plantations. These slaves are the ancestors of today's Haitian immigrants ("Haiti: A Country," 2004).

Haiti represents the first successful overthrow of a colonial power at a time when European and American economies thrived on the profits of slavery's cheap labor. By



1697, the western part of the island had become a French colony and in 1804 a slave led revolution defeated the French army and established Haiti as the world's first independent black republic. Haiti's independence did little to prevent a succession of dictatorships. In 1915, invoking political unrest and German presence, the United States occupied Haiti until 1934. The United States presence and subsequent departure did not change Haiti's social conditions. Poverty and political instability have persisted (Haggerty, 1991; "Haiti: A Country," 2004).

Today the island of Hispaniola is divided into two distinct countries and cultures: the eastern part of the island is the Spanish speaking country of the Dominican Republic while the western part remains the French/Creole speaking country of Haiti ("Haiti: A Country," 2004). Located less than two hours flying time off the coast of Florida, Haiti remains the poorest and hungriest country in the Caribbean and the Western Hemisphere (Ryan et al., 2004). It is also one of the most densely populated countries in the Caribbean with an estimated population of 8 million people (Jacobson, 2003). Its distribution of income and wealth is one of the most inequitable in the world with less than 1% of the population controlling almost 50% of the country's wealth (Bastien, 1995; Fauntroy, 1980). Haiti's gross domestic product averages less than \$450 per head and has not changed since 1970 (Gage & Calixte, 2006).

Currently, approximately 70% of the population is unemployed, 80% of Haitians live below the poverty line and almost 60% of Haitians live in extreme poverty. Most have no access to potable water, electricity; government run services or services in general (Charles, 2006; United Nations, 2000; World Bank, 2008). Starvation is a major cause of illness and death (Worker, 1994) and life expectancy is 49 years of age

(Jacobson, 2003). Rates of infant mortality and AIDS are the highest in the western hemisphere with 33% of Haitian children failing to reach their fifth birthday (Farmer, 2004). The absence/abandonment of farm land and farming has forced many Haitians to rely on donated food products from other nations. Approximately 67% of Haitians live in rural communities and 33 % in cities. Port-Au-Prince, the capital city, has an estimated population of well over a million (Jacobson, 2003).

Haiti's education system is free and compulsory, however most schools are private and are administered under the auspices of Church groups. The cost of books and uniforms limits access for poorer families, and schools are almost non-existent in rural areas (Jacobson, 2003). The literacy rate for most adult Haitians is 50% (World Bank, 2008). Haitian health institutions are considered deplorable (Ryan et al, 2004). Health care services are inequitable and inaccessible to almost 40% of the rural population, most of who rely on traditional practitioners for their health needs (PAHO 2000, as cited in Gage & Calixte, 2006). In the urban areas, there is one doctor for every 4, 000 patients and in rural communities it may run as high as 8,000 patients. Access to modern facilities is difficult and costly with most facilities privately run and located in Port-Au-Prince (Haggerty, 1991).

#### *Haitian Immigration to the United States*

Since the inception of President Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier's regime in 1957, Haitians have witnessed a surge of psychosocial and economic barriers to quality of life, which include political instability, underdevelopment, human rights violations, abject poverty, and limited access to resources (Farmer, 2006; Stepick & Portes, 1986). In fact, President Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son Jean Claude Duvalier regimes are

much to blame for Haiti's current abject socioeconomic conditions (Zephir, 2004). Their regimes also depleted Haiti of its educated elites many of whom migrated to the United States, Canada, France and Africa. This "Brain Drain" led to a decline in gross national product (Stepick & Portes, 1985).

Absolute poverty in the context of deteriorating social, economic and political conditions is considered the fundamental cause of migration from Haiti (Bastien, 1995, Stepick & Portes, 1986). These conditions of life in Haiti created an inevitable "push" factor for emigration as Haitians sought viable alternatives to life in Haiti. Most migrated to neighboring countries in the Caribbean like Cuba and the Dominican Republic, eventually making their way to the United States (Farmer, 2006). While a small group of Haitian intellectuals arrived in New York City during the U.S. occupation of Haiti, the majority of Haitians emigrated to the United States in four successive waves which are the subject of this study.

*First and second wave immigration.* In 1957, the first mass exodus of Haitians immigrants arrived in the United States. They were mostly members of the upper and middle class who opposed the Duvalier regime and left as a direct result of political repression and economic duress (Bastien, 1995; Portes & Stepick, 1986). Most were highly educated professionals, students and skilled laborers. They encountered minimal language barriers and shared similar middle class values and aspirations as their U.S counterparts. The U.S. government considered them desirable and allowed them to remain in the United States legally (Bastien, 1995; Charles, 2006; Desrosiers & St Fleurose, 2002; Fouron, 1985). Their immigration was little cause for concern. Their arrival made few headlines. It is commonly believed that these Haitian immigrants were

able to quietly transition into U.S mainstream society (Bastien, 1995; Charles, 2004; Desrosiers & St. Fleurose, 2002).

In the late 60's and early 70's, a second mass exodus of Haitians arrived in the United States as the Duvalier presidency continued the breakdown of society. Haitian institutions became increasingly corrupt, inefficient, and ineffective, leading to generalized distrust and disillusion (Bastien, 1995; Burtoff-Civan, 1995; Drachman, 1992; Portes & Stepick, 1986; Stepick, Stepick & Kretsedemas, 2001). At the time of their arrival, the United States was at war in Vietnam, and, faced with a shortage of skilled laborers, eased immigration laws to allow for skilled laborers from various countries, including Haiti to enter the country. After the Vietnam War, however, new immigration laws were enacted preventing many Haitians from entering the United States legally. Desperate to leave Haiti, many Haitians then started to enter the United States by clandestine boats (Fouron, 1985; Stepick & Portes, 1986).

*Third and fourth wave immigration.* In 1980, a third mass exodus of Haitian immigrants arrived in the United States. They arrived unannounced, by clandestine means and made the United States their first country of asylum. They were mostly poor, rural peasants who could no longer make a living off the land (Bastien, 1995). Their arrival coincided with the Cuban exodus of Mariel and marked the first U.S. refugee crisis (Charles, 2002). These Haitian immigrants received harsh treatment under U.S immigration policies, specifically the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act and the 1981 Haitian Interdiction Agreement.

The U.S. government enacted the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act in response to the large scale influx of refugees from Southeast Asia and the Soviet Union. The Refugee Act

addressed the need for more systematic admission and resettlement procedures, redefined the term refugee to reflect the UN definition of refugee and distinguished a refugee from an asylee. No longer were refugees considered to be individuals fleeing communist or Middle East countries (Aleinekoff, Martin, & Motomura, 2003; Potocky-Tripodi, 2002).

The U.S. Refugee Act created categories for admission and provided resettlement services which included relocation assistance, medical care, financial aid, employment and language training. Refugees were able to obtain SSI, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid and Food Stamps. And after one year, political refugees could change their status to immigrant (Drachman, 1995). However the primary beneficiaries of the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act continued to arrive from Southeast Asia, Cuba, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union (Zucker & Zucker, 1996). Under this immigration act, Haitian refugees were considered economic refugees and thus disentitled to resettlement services (Potocky, 1996).

On September 23, 1981, President Reagan signed the U.S. Haitian Interdiction Agreement “in an effort to stem the movement of undocumented Haitians by boat to the United States” at a time of political upheaval in Haiti (Fontus & Sherman, 1990, p.3). President Reagan stated that the Interdiction Agreement was necessary “...in view of the continuing problem of migrants coming to the United States, by sea, without necessary entry documents...” (Executive Order No.12324, 1981). Haiti was the only foreign government to have an agreement of this nature with the U. S. government. This agreement was presented as a collaborative effort between both governments to reduce illegal immigration to the United States and safeguard the welfare of Haitians traveling on clandestine vessels across treacherous waters. In exchange, the U.S. government

promised to assist the Haitian government in enforcing its restrictive emigration laws by preventing Haitian nationals from leaving Haiti (Fontus & Sherman, 1990; Little, 1999; Weissbrodt, 1998).

The Haitian Interdiction Agreement is considered one of the most discriminatory U.S. immigration policies and the U.S. government's treatment of Haitians is categorized as racist and illegal under U.S. and international laws (Balgopal, 2000). The Interdiction Agreement continues to keep Haitian refugees from seeking asylum in the United States by summarily returning them to Haiti before they ever reach U.S. shores (Balgopal, 2000, Fontus & Sherman, 1990; Little, 1999; Zucker & Zucker, 1996). And Haitians who manage to make their way into U.S. society by boat remain for the most part undocumented.

The final wave of Haitian immigrants followed the 1991 overthrow of the democratically elected president Jean Bertrand Aristide. Although the majority of these immigrants consisted of rural peasants, also included were Haitians from other walks of life: students, activists, women and merchants (Bastien, 1995). Today, Haitians continue to arrive in the United States legally and illegally and are expected to continue to do so as the unfavorable socioeconomic conditions in Haiti persist.

#### *Haitian Communities in the United States.*

The Haitian community in the United States consists of several communities divided by class, language, race, residential background, and political or ideological opinion (Stepick et al., 2001). Despite Haitian immigrants' long history of struggle, the Haitian community in the United States is not unified. Older and more affluent Haitian communities have consistently distanced themselves from the issues and realities of

poorer, rural and less educated Haitians (Bastien, 1995; Stepick et al., 2001). This response has much to do with Haiti's social structure and the ties that bind Haitians to their history. An example of social class distancing was found in Stepick et al. (2001) study on civic engagement among the Haitian community in South Florida. This study found that Haitian immigrants from higher social class "Bourgeoisie" are as unlikely as xenophobic Americans to engage in civic activities to benefit Haitian immigrants from a lower social class. The history of Haitian class division creates a distrust of the bourgeoisie among working class Haitians.

Most Haitian immigrants settled along the eastern border of the United States. There are 180,000 Haitians living in New York State and New York City has the oldest and largest concentration of Haitian immigrants in the United States. Approximately 156,000 Haitians live legally in New York City. However, it is believed that the number of Haitian immigrants, legal and illegal, is closer to 400,000 (Zephir, 2004). Middle class Haitians have established themselves in the borough of Queens while working class Haitians have congregated in the borough of Brooklyn. New York City has a thriving Haitian community. Haitians hold political office, own businesses, have developed several social and community resources and media outlets in the form of newspapers, television and radio talk shows (Zephir, 2004).

More recently, Florida has outpaced the State of New York to become the primary area of settlement for Haitian immigrants. The number of Haitians in Florida has more than doubled between 1990 and 2000. According to the 2000 census, there are approximately 233,881 people of Haitian descent living in Florida, however some estimate their number to be closer to 1 million (Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005). Haitian

immigrants are the largest Caribbean population in the state of Florida and represent more than one third of the Haitian population in the United States: some are undocumented, some are transplants from northern states, and others come directly from Haiti as legal immigrants (Stepick & Stepick, 1990; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005; Zephir, 2004).

Unlike the New York Haitian community which reflects a higher social standing in both Haiti and the United States, many Haitian immigrants in Florida represent a much lower social standing and a linguistic minority marginalized by both English and Spanish speaking communities (Kretsedemas, 2005). In fact, Florida also holds the newest and poorest Haitian enclave with poverty rates more than three times the national average (Kretsedemas, 2003; Portes & Zhou, 1994; Stepick & Stepick, 1990). Their pattern of resettlement in the Miami area is based on their social class. Middle class Haitians, many of whom moved down from the North live in Miami Shores, North Miami Beach, Kendall and Coral Gables, whereas, a large segment of lower class Haitians live in Little Haiti and the Edison/Little River neighborhoods (Zephir, 2004; St. Jean & Crandall, 2005). The Haitian community in Florida has made much progress and has grown to include Haitian businesses, radio stations, and community and advocacy centers. Many Haitians hold political office at both the local and state levels (Zephir, 2004).

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has the third largest number of Haitians in the United States. According to recent statistics, there are approximately 80,000 Haitians living there with most located in the Boston Metropolitan area. The neighborhood of Mattapan holds the largest number of Haitians (Zephir, 2004). In the 1980s, Boston's Haitian community underwent a demographic explosion with the birth of second



generation children, the growing numbers of sponsored family members arriving from Haiti, and the migration north of Haitians from New York and South Florida in search of employment opportunities (Zephir, 2004). The 1980's also marked the development of Haitian centric organizations in Boston that addressed such issues as health care, women's rights, immigration and domestic abuse. In 1991, Boston witnessed the influx of Haitian refugees, following the military coup d'Etat in Haiti. Today, the Haitian community in Boston is thriving with Haitian businesses, Haitian community based organizations and a strong political representation (Zephir, 2004).

Most Haitian immigrants who arrived in New York City were first and second wave immigrants and represented a more affluent Haitian population. Their immigration experience was considered uneventful and generally they remained in the United States legally. While New York continued to attract immigrants from Haiti, changes in U.S immigration laws, and the subsequent overthrow of the Duvalier and Aristide presidencies forced many Haitians from the second, third and fourth waves Haitian immigration to seek entrance by clandestine means. As a result, a majority of them made Florida their initial destination point (Fouron, 1985). A disproportionate number of these immigrants were rural peasants and unlike their predecessors, their immigration experience was challenged by discriminatory policies, race, poverty, language barriers and unfavorable labor market experiences. Still today and despite these experiences, the Haitian community remains divided by social structure.

#### *Overview of Haitian Culture*

*Identity.* Haitians have a strong sense of pride and self-reliance which reflects their history as citizens of the first Black independent nation. However in the United

States, their triple minority status, foreign, black and Creole speaking makes adaptation more difficult for them than for other immigrant populations (Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005). Their race isolates them from white Americans and their language and cultural beliefs isolate them from African Americans and other Black English speaking immigrant populations from the Caribbean, like Jamaicans and Trinidadians.

However at times, this isolation is self-imposed as Haitian immigrants confront the realities of racial discrimination in the United States, which is a relatively new experience for most of them. In the United States, skin color is considered “the most powerful characteristic for social stratification and discrimination” (Appiah & Gutman, 1998, p.39), whereas in Haiti, although there is a correlation between race, skin color and Haitian social class divisions, skin color plays a secondary role to social class standing.

However it is often difficult to separate race and skin color from social class standing, given that members of the highest social class are often of mulatto, or European descent and members of the lowest social class standing are of African descent. Although these divisions along race, skin tone and class are remnants of Haiti’s colonial history, which created a mulatto elite and black majority, they are maintained through intermarriage within social classes, skin color, education, and French language skills (Pierce & Elisme, 2000). As a result, the Black mass tended to be poorer, less educated while the lighter skinned Haitians maintained the wealth and also much of the political, social and economic power. This is still evidenced in today’s Haiti.

Haiti’s status as the poorest country in the western hemisphere, and the many negative stereotypes of Haitian immigrants in the United States is a source of shame. Haitian immigrants, particularly those who pass as Whites and middle class Haitians who

have a command of the English language and American culture, often hide their Haitian identity as a result of these anti-Haitian sentiments, particularly in South Florida (Desrosiers & St Fleurose, 2002; Stepick & Stepick, 1990; Wahkisi, 1994) and distance themselves from Haitians of a lower social class standing. Social class divisions are often labeled by such terms as “Bourgeoisie” and “Peuple”, the latter representing the majority of Haitians who belong to a lower social class. They are typically darker and poorer and less educated.

*Family.* Haitian culture is highly centered on the family and on extended family networks in both Haiti and in the United States (Doucet, 2005; Latta & Goodman, 2005). These kinship networks play a key role in immigrant adjustment to U.S. society (Desrosiers & St Fleurose, 2002; Latta & Goodman, 2005) and the absence of family makes adaptation extremely difficult. According to Bastien (1995), the family council which is comprised of leading members of the family is the most important unit for decision-making in Haitian culture. The Haitian family often replaces the western notion of social service institutions, and many Haitians turn to family units for financial assistance and almost all major life decisions (Doucet, 2005; Latta & Goodman, 2005).

*Language.* Language skills play an important role in the adjustment of immigrants in host countries (Chiswick & Miller, 1995; Padilla, 1997). For many Haitian immigrants, particularly those who arrived during the latter two waves of Haitian immigration, the language barrier was extremely problematic. Most Haitian immigrants were limited to speaking Creole. As such they were often regarded as illiterates (Portes et al., 1992).

Since most Haitians have limited access to formal education in Haiti and the literacy rate remains around 50%, oral transmission in Creole is the more common means

of communication throughout Haiti. It is therefore not surprising that upon their arrival in the United States not only do many Haitians experience barriers to written communication but also oral communication as Creole is not taught in U.S schools.

Thus, English language proficiency and availability of translators become essential determinants of the utilization of services by Haitian immigrants. It should be noted that in the United States, French speaking middle class Haitian immigrants occupy a far more prestigious position as immigrants than as a Black population (Jackson, 2003).

*Religion.* Most Haitians are highly religious and although the majority is Catholic, many are members of the protestant religions. The religion of Vodou (voodoo) is also widely practiced and remains a symbol of Haiti's enduring social structure. Upper and middle class Haitians, generally Catholic, tend to deny the practice of voodoo which they associate with the beliefs and behaviors of Haitians from the lower strata (Desrosiers & St Fleurose, 2002; Zephir, 2004). However in times of stress, Voodoo remains a resource for health and mental health problems among all social classes in Haiti and in the United States.

Among all Haitian social classes, the Catholic Church remains a strong cultural symbol and an institution to be trusted outside the family unit in both Haiti and the United States (Stepick et al., 2001). In the United States, the Catholic Church recreates social ties and provides a place for Haitian immigrants to counter the negative effects of migration (Jackson, 2003). Haitian immigrants attend church more often "than is the norm for Latin American immigrants" (Stepick & Portes, 1986, p.345). Historically, the Catholic Church's power and influence allowed Haitian immigrants to generate greater social capital and counter "the effects of downward assimilation into the urban

underclass” (Jackson, 2003, p.204). For many French speaking middle class Haitian immigrants, the Catholic faith secures their social distancing from African Americans and Haitians from a lower social class.

### *Social Structures in Haiti and in Haitians Communities in the United States*

Haiti’s social structure antedates Haiti’s independence and represents a three tier system of class division created under French colonialism. This social structure was determined by slave status, color, class, culture and religious beliefs. The French Whites (Grand Blancs) occupied the top tier of the class system and dominated Haiti’s economy, government and social life. Included were the contract workers and indentured servants “couches moyenne” who oversaw the work on plantations and the “Petit Blancs” who consisted of artisans, craftsmen, and shopkeepers. The “Petit Blancs” were landless and considered the most racist, as many were forced to compete against the Mulatto “Affranchis” for jobs (Zephir, 2004). The Mulatto (Affranchis) made up the second tier. They were the offsprings of French whites and African slave women. Although they held a lower status than “Petit Blancs,” many gained similar economic power as the French. They also adopted much of the French culture. The last tier consisted of African slaves or “negre bossal” and slaves born in the colony “negre creole.” They were owned by both French and Affranchis. They worked mainly on sugar plantations and experienced extreme human suffering (Buchanan, 1980; Zephir, 2004).

Although Haiti’s independence eliminated the French, the established social structure remained intact. The mulattos (Affranchis) took power and constituted the ruling class. They emulated the French culture in all aspects of their social and political lives and because they were educated and literate they controlled much of the labor

markets, primarily in the import-export industry. The free Blacks turned to agriculture and maintained much of their African ties in religious and social practices (Buchanan, 1980).

Haitian social structure is much as it was in the past. The mulattos continue to rule most private and government institutions. They represent less than 5% of the Haitian population and control over 50% of Haiti's wealth. Their ethnic background is diverse, mulatto, French, Syrian, Lebanese and Polish (Zephir, 2004). Their primary language is French, however most speak Creole. They have access to modern facilities, and institutions and many receive their education abroad. Most are Catholic and tend to marry within their social class (Haggerty, 1991).

Under educational reform, Haiti witnessed the emergence of a Black middle class. Many members of this new middle class enter government service and benefit from higher living standards than urban poor and rural peasants (Haggerty, 1991). They live mainly in urban areas; however outnumber the elites in rural communities. They are more tolerant of the Creole language than Haitians of a higher social standing and many continue to practice voodoo (Haggerty, 1991).

However, the majority of Haitians are rural peasants or urban poor. The rural peasants are mostly illiterate farmers who speak Creole and practice voodoo. Many own land; however, few have access to modern health and sanitation facilities, government services, or socioeconomic benefits (Gage & Calixte, 2006; Haggerty, 1991). At the bottom of the class system are the urban poor who migrated from rural communities and remained trapped in cities. Many have no jobs, no housing and no education and are

relegated to life in the slums. The urban poor often return to their rural communities for social and financial support (Fouron, 1985).

These class divisions reflect a deeply rooted Haitian social structure based on a strong class system, whereby each class becomes its own separate society. These distinct societies experience considerable differences in family life, educational experiences, diversions, and health practices (Simpson, 1948). Haitian social structure is an important aspect of Haitian culture and life and is reflected in “political forms and tactics, economic inequalities, occupational opportunities and disabilities, the language problem, educational differences, discrepancies in family behavior, religious life, and health practices” (Simpson, 1948, p. 649). It is still reflected in today’s Haitian society, and continues to represent privilege and access to resources (Pierce & Elisme, 2000).

Again, Haitian social structure is less about economic wealth obtained in the United States and more about the value of family name, birthplace, and area of residence, comportment and educational level established in Haiti (Buchanan, 1980). Although Haitian social structure also includes divisions based on race and skin color, these factors play a secondary role in the Haitian class system. This fact is observed during resettlement, as Haitian immigrants in the United States confront social stratification and discrimination based on skin color (Appiah & Gutman, 1998; Zephir, 1996). Most first generation Haitian immigrants function within the Haitian social structure. It is this social structure, and not the U.S. social structure, that provides them with their frame of reference for acceptable ideologies and behaviors. One of the endearing features of Haitian social structure is the French language.

In the United States, many Haitian immigrants, particularly those from the first and second wave of Haitian immigration are said to communicate in French as a way to create social distance and maintain aspects of their class status, which may have been lost in the immigration process. It is said, that for these Haitian immigrants, the French language and culture create a sense of superiority over Black and White Americans, and distinguishes upper class Haitian immigrants from Black American culture, other Black immigrant groups and Haitians from a lower class (Buchanan, 1979). French remains a symbol of cultural hierarchy retained to counteract the effects of racism, changes in socioeconomic status, language barriers and discrimination in the United States. It is an example of Haitian social structure and influences Haitian immigrants' identity, beliefs and behaviors in the United States (Stepick et al., 2001). However, U.S. society categorizes Haitian immigrants by their racial and ethnic background; as such they are identified as Black immigrants. There is often little consideration given to the complexities created by Haitian social structure.

In summary, this chapter provided an overview of Haiti and Haitian culture by presenting historical events which lead to Haiti's current socioeconomic condition and the subsequent migration of Haitians to other countries, including the United States. It discussed the four distinct waves of Haitian immigration to the United States, and how each wave reflected different context of pre-migration, group composition and patterns of resettlement. Several key aspects of Haitian culture were also discussed as was the Haitian social structure in Haiti and in the United States. Although Haitian immigration to the United States was challenged by discriminatory policies, language barriers, racism and poverty, these challenges have failed to unify the Haitian community. Haiti's social



structure may be a strong factor in maintaining the divisions which persist within the Haitian community in the United States. Therefore, a better grasp of the influence of Haiti's social structure may be significant in understanding Haitians immigrants' help-seeking behaviors in the United States.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Literature Review of Empirical Studies on Help-Seeking Behaviors**

The literature review is intended to shed light on the various factors which impact immigrant help-seeking behavior in the United States and abroad. This chapter is divided into three parts: (a) a review of empirical studies on immigrant help-seeking behaviors, (b) a review of empirical studies on Haitian immigrant help-seeking behaviors and (c) a review of empirical studies on immigrant help-seeking behaviors and socioeconomic status (social class). Part (a) provides an overview of studies on various immigrant communities and the factors that impact their help-seeking behaviors. The results of these studies are based on both immigrant populations in the United States and abroad. Part (b) presents studies conducted on the Haitian immigrant population in the United States, and the factors that impact their help-seeking behaviors. Part (c) provides a synopsis of help-seeking studies, and the role of social class on immigrant help-seeking behaviors.

#### **Empirical Studies on Immigrant Help-seeking Behaviors**

Help-seeking studies on health (Chung & Lin, 1994; Gong, Gage & Takata, 2003; Leclerc, Jensen & Biddlecom, 1994; Martinez & Carter-Pokras 2006; Parker, Chan & Tully, 2006), mental health (Youssef & Deane, 2006), and community and social resources (Auslander, Sauffer & Auslander, 2003; Auslander, Neufeld, Harrison, Stewart, Hughes, & Spitzer, 2002; Soskolne & Ben-Shahar, 2005; Soskolne, Auslander & Ben-Shahar, 2006) identify several factors that impact immigrant help-seeking behaviors. These factors represent intrinsic and extrinsic variables. These variables include education, language proficiency, familiarity with host culture, acculturation, cultural expectations and influences, context of departure and arrival, immigration status and

economic and social status. The most common factors are discussed in the following section, and include, immigration status, health insurance and income, language and cultural barriers, and familiarity with available resources.

### *Factors Influencing Help-Seeking*

*Immigration status.* Immigration and immigrant policies play a key role in immigrant help-seeking behaviors. Immigration policies regulate the number of persons admitted to the United States and oversee the assignment of immigration statuses through the Department of Homeland Security, formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (Drachman, 1995). These assigned statuses determine the types of resources available under immigrant policies. Immigrant policies intended to facilitate the social and economic integration of immigrants through the provision of social welfare, health, education, housing and employment programs (Padilla, 1997). However, not all immigrants are entitled to such said services, particularly those who arrive as undocumented or those labeled economic refugees.

Since the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the United States has witnessed an increase in the number of immigrants from less economically developed countries. For many immigrant populations, their lack of legal immigration status, English proficiency, work skills and education, force them into secondary labor markets (Portes & Stepick, 1986). These labor markets consist of low paying jobs with minimal benefits. As a result, many immigrants experience greater levels of poverty, and social and economic hardships than legal immigrants (Drachman, 1995; Padilla, 1997).

The influx of immigrants created anti-immigrant sentiments. During the 1990's, these sentiments were pervasive, particularly towards illegal or undocumented

immigrants and lead to the passing of two major pieces of immigration legislation. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Padilla, Shapiro, Fernandez-Castro & Faulkner, 2008).

The PRWORA created a series of restrictive policies intended to reduce the number of immigrants eligible to receive government sponsored resources. Although several of the initial restrictions were eased, such as SSI eligibility for elderly and disabled immigrants, termination of food stamps and SSI for post PRWORA immigrants, and food stamp eligibility for elderly, disabled and child age immigrants who lived in the United States during the passing of the PRWORA, immigrants and refugees use of resources declined. This decline was attributed to policy changes surrounding eligibility, as well as the social and economic factors associated with an undocumented status. (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005).

Several studies discuss the effects of immigration policies and immigration status on the help-seeking behaviors of immigrants. Neufeld, Harrison, Stewart, Spitzer and Hughes (2002) identified immigration sponsor policies and refugee status as barriers to accessing community resources, among immigrant Asian women caregivers. Under the sponsorship policies, sponsor families are required to financially support their immigrant family members for a period of 10 years. This 10-year sponsorship requirement limited immigrant Asian women caregivers' eligibility for resources. In addition, immigration status pointed to inequities in available resources. The study (2002) found resources for refugees far outnumbered those made available to family sponsored immigrants.

Martinez and Carter-Pokras (2006) linked legal status and social security number to utilization of health resources, among Latino immigrants in Baltimore. Their fear of having their immigration status revealed and the need to register for services with a social security number contributed to the underutilization of resources. Legal status and ability to obtain a social security number increased access to resources.

Ammar, Oloff, Dutton and Aguilar-Hass (2004) studied the help-seeking behaviors of Latina women in their attempts to flee, reduce or end domestic violence. Ammar and collaborators (2004) identified eight factors which contributed to Latina immigrant women's readiness to contact law enforcement, length of stay in the United States, immigration status, female support systems, involvement in an intimate relationship, frequency of the battering, severity, prior experience with injury and their children's exposure to domestic violence. However, stable immigration status and children's exposure to domestic violence were the primary motivating factors for contacting law enforcement. Immigrant Latina women were less likely to seek assistance with an unstable immigration status.

In a study of undocumented Mexican immigrants, Chavez, Flores and Lopez-Garza (1992) identified immigration status, specifically lack of immigration status (undocumented) as a key determinant to the availability of resources. The lack of immigration status was also linked to structural obstacles such as secondary labor markets and absence of health insurance.

*Health insurance.* Several immigrant help-seeking studies identified health insurance as a key determinant of access and utilization of resources

(Chavez & collaborators 1992; Hamilton, Hummer, You & Padilla, 2006; Martinez & Carter-Pokras, 2006). As previously stated, since the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, many immigrants arrive with a tenuous immigration status, and less skilled and economically stable. As a result, they work jobs with minimal pay and minimal to no health coverage. Limited income and cash flow prevent many immigrants from paying the upfront costs of health services and some health settings require individuals to have health insurance (Gelfand & Bialik-Gilad, 1989). These factors force many immigrants to underutilize health a resource. And for undocumented immigrants, their underutilization is compounded by the real fear of being discovered, and deported.

A study by Chavez et al. (1992) on health coverage and utilization of health services among documented versus undocumented Mexican immigrants, identified lack of health insurance coverage as a significant factor in Mexican immigrants' use of health resources. Undocumented immigrants who lacked health insurance were less likely to obtain health coverage and access health care facilities than their undocumented co-ethnics with insurance. Health coverage was also determined to be a mitigating factor in use of medical services among undocumented Mexican immigrants.

Hamilton and collaborators (2006) analyzed the health care utilization and health coverage of first generation Mexican children in the United States. Their findings suggested that the underutilization of resources in the absence of health insurance among first generation Mexican children may be explained by factors impacting their parents, specifically language barriers, socioeconomic status, lack of familiarity with U.S. resources, work schedules and transportation. Similarly, Martinez and Carter-Pokras (2006) identified absence of health insurance as a barrier to health care utilization among

Latino populations in Baltimore. In this study, Martinez and Carter-Pokras (2006) found that three quarters of the community members lacked health insurance and underutilized health resources in large part due to a belief about quality of health care provided. Many respondents seemed to believe that absence of health coverage would result in poorer health care services. Many also discussed the associated costs of health coverage over its benefits.

*Language barriers.* The language barrier is also a factor in immigrant help-seeking behaviors, particularly due to a large influx of immigrants from non-English speaking countries. In the United States, these immigrants must attempt to seek resources in the absence of host language proficiency. Several help-seeking studies discuss language barriers as negatively impacting immigrants' help-seeking behaviors (Chung & Lin, 1994; Martinez & Carter-Pokras, 2006; Neufeld & Collaborators, 2002; Ngo-Metzer et al. 2003). Martinez and Carter-Pokras (2006) found that various Latino immigrants in the Baltimore area identified language barriers as an impediment to health care utilization. They further discussed the absence of Spanish language proficiency among service providers as a detriment to seeking services.

Chung and Lin's (1994) study on use of western medicine among five Asian refugee populations found that English language proficiency influenced Asian immigrants' decision to seek western medicine. Higher rates of English language proficiency resulted in higher rates of utilization of western medicine. Soskolne and collaborators (2006) found that language barrier influenced underutilization of medical and social work services among ageing recent and long-term Russian immigrants to Israel. Language barrier was also found to limit use of community resources among

Asian immigrant women in Canada (Newfeld & collaborator, 2002). In a study on barriers to care, Ngo-Metzer and collaborators (2003) found that language barriers created confusion and concerns among Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants seeking health resources, in particular the use of culturally appropriate interpreters. Respondents expressed concerns with the interpreters' ability to accurately communicate their health needs, and accurately translate the health providers' response

*Cultural barriers and service providers.* Cultural factors also the impact help-seeking behavior of immigrant populations. There are several studies which discuss help-seeking behaviors as outcomes of cultural beliefs. In a study by Gong and collaborators, (2003) concerns with "loss of face" was found to impact the help-seeking behavior of Filipino immigrants in the United States. Filipinos immigrants' concerns with "loss of face" decreased their utilization of the mental health system, and increased the likelihood of using the lay system. A study by Youssef and Deane (2006) attributed shame, stigma and religious precepts to underutilization of mental health service among Arabic-speaking people in Australia. In a study by Shin (2002), the absence of culturally sensitive services reduced the use of mental health services by Korean immigrants in the United States.

Shor (2007) studied help-seeking among Russian immigrant parents in Israel. The purpose of the study was to differentiate culturally based patterns of help-seeking between Russian immigrants in Israel and Russians in the former Soviet Union. In the former Soviet Union, psychiatric care was perceived as abusive and psychiatrists and Russian immigrants were often reluctant to seek mental health services from these government run services. This reluctance to seek mental health services spilled over into



other professions such as psychology and social work (Slonon-Nevo, Sharaga & Mirsky, 1999 as cited by Shor, 2007). The study's outcomes indicated that Russian immigrants in Israel maintained similar cultural patterns of help-seeking as their Russian counterparts in the former Soviet Union (Shor, 2007).

*Familiarity with resources.* Many immigrant populations are not familiar with available resources in host countries. Auslander and collaborators (2005) found that lack of familiarity with resources, resulted in underutilization of health social work services among older Russian immigrants and Veteran residents of Israel. For Russian immigrants in particular, the absence of social work services in the former Soviet Union, and their 'lack of experience in requesting assistance,' "lack of confidence in professional assistance," "and lack of information" (Sharlin, 1998, p. 242 as cited by Auslander et al, 2005) caused many to underutilize health services. They were also less likely to have visited a social worker than Veteran residents. The results suggested that the underutilization of social work services may reflect a lack of understanding of social work services. In a similar study of Russian immigrants in Israel, Soskolne and collaborators (2006) identified lack of familiarity with the social work profession and lack of familiarity with accessing social services as factors that influence their underutilization of social resources.

#### Empirical Studies on Haitian Immigrant Help-seeking Behaviors

The presence of Haitian immigrants in the United States has increased substantially over the last three decades; particularly along the Eastern coast (Schantz, Charron, & Folden, 2003). However, a review of help-seeking studies on Haitian immigrants reveals a limited body of literature. And with the exception of Stepick and

collaborators (2001), the effect of social class and more specifically social class as a cultural construct has not been examined in the context of Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior. Nevertheless past research provides a useful basis for extending the analysis to include social class as a cultural construct.

As indicated by the following studies, Haitian help-seeking behaviors are influenced by several factors including immigration status, health insurance, language barriers, cultural beliefs and awareness and access to supportive resources.

#### *Factors Influencing Help-Seeking*

*Immigration status.* Many Haitian immigrants arrive in the United States with a tenuous immigration status. Although many Haitian immigrants arrive with legal documentation, a large portion of the population is undocumented. As with other immigrant populations, undocumented Haitian immigrants are forced to enter secondary labor markets, which offer little pay and limited fringe benefits. Of those who seek asylum in the United States, they are often considered economic migrants as opposed to political refugees, and therefore disintitled to government sponsored refugee resources, like the refugee resettlement program.

Immigration status is a key factor in the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants. Several help-seeking studies identified the impact of a legal status on access and utilization of resources. Latta and Goodman (2005) determined that Haitian immigrant women's help-seeking behaviors in the context of intimate partner violence (IPV) were heavily influenced by contextual and structural factors in Haiti and the United States. In particular, Haitian immigrant women's immigration status affected accessibility to mainstream services. Their fear of deportation and potential for greater economic

instability prevented many Haitian immigrant women from reporting acts of violence and accessing supportive resources (Latta & Goodman, 2005). Schantz and collaborators (2003) studied the health seeking behaviors of Haitian parents in caring for their school aged children and found that several families identified their immigration issues and legal status as barriers to seeking health care resources. Many parents did not apply for Medicaid for their non U.S. citizen children and almost half of the 62 participants identified immigration status as a deterrent to seeking tax based health insurance.

Ryan et al., (2004) examined barriers to accessing health care among 49 Haitian immigrants in South Florida. Fear of deportation was a significant factor to access of health resources even among Haitian immigrants residing in the United States legally. These fears were further reinforced by daily reports of Haitian deportations.

Bronstein and Kelly (1998) found that Haitian immigrants' immigration status impacted their use of school linked services in a South Florida public elementary school. These school link services are near or at a specified school to facilitate access to health and social services among families in poverty. The purpose of these services is to enhance the families' educational and social environment. For many Haitian immigrant families their status as Haitian immigrants made job attainment, and access to public assistance and health care more challenging. In fact, many of them refused government sponsored services for fear of being labeled public charge a status which they believed could affect their ability to bring in other family members to the United States.

In a separate study by Cedeno- Zamor (1999) Haitian women's lack of familiarity with U.S. policies towards Haitian immigrants, created a fear of deportation and underutilization of available resources. Saint -Jean and Crandall's (2005) study on

utilization of preventive health care by Haitian immigrants, identified immigration status as an important determinant to accessing care. Non U.S. citizens with limited education, English language proficiency and an annual income of less than \$ 31, 000.00 were less likely to seek regular annual health checkups.

*Health insurance.* Health insurance has a significant impact on the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants. Schantz and collaborators (2003) identified the absence of health coverage and subsequent costs of health services as barriers for Haitian parents, seeking health resources, for their school aged children. The study (2002) focused on three distinct areas, health insurance, location of health care services, and the manner in which Haitian parents cared for their sick children. Although most participants reported satisfaction with their children's health provider, the findings identified additional barriers of transportation and eligibility requirements for government subsidies. Several families identified their Haitian ethnicity as a barrier to seeking health insurance due to immigration issues. Many Haitian families had misconceptions about available health care services, distrust for government run programs, and misinformation about the programs. In this study, education and advocacy were identified as factors which could increase utilization of health care services among Haitian families.

Saint-Jean and Crandall (2005) also identified health insurance coverage as an important determinant of preventive care among Haitian immigrants. As in previous studies, there is a positive correlation between insurance coverage and utilization of health services.

In a study by Green, Freund, Posner and David (2005) of Pap Smear rates among Haitian women, health insurance, marital status, physician gender's and access to a single

site health facility were found to positively influence the rate of pap smears among Haitian women. However, the study also indicated that Haitian women had lower rates of Pap smear examinations than Latina, African American and English speaking Caribbean women of color.

*Language barriers.* English language proficiency is a key determinant of individual acculturation in the United States (Portes, Kyle & Eaton, 1992). The lack of English language proficiency places immigrants at greater risk of underutilizing health resources and childcare services and of experiencing greater employment barriers (Kretsedemas, 2006). For many Haitian immigrants, this lack of English language proficiency poses a serious problem, particularly among Creole (only) speaking Haitian immigrants.

Several studies on Haitian immigrants identified language and communication barriers as deterrents to seeking resources (Ryan & collaborators, 2004). For Haitian immigrants, English language proficiency is a factor in access and utilization of resources, as is the limited number of interpreters fluent in Creole (Bronstein & Kelly, 1998; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005). English language proficiency is also a key determinant to utilization of preventive resources among Haitian immigrants. Bronstein and Kelly (1998) found that language barriers impacted Haitian immigrant families' use of school linked services in the Miami area. These studies supported previous studies which identified the importance of language proficiency in the utilization of supportive resources among Haitian immigrants.

*Cultural barriers and service providers.* Raised in a climate of rampant corruption and political violence in Haiti, many Haitian immigrants distrust formal institutions

(Bronstein & Kelly, 1998, Stepick & collaborators, 2001). However, this sense of distrust is not only limited to formal institutions; it is also prevalent within the Haitian community itself, due to differences in political affiliations, social class and geographic positioning (Mateyer, Jean- Louis & Madison, 2004).

According to service providers, many Haitian immigrant have a fear being of being labeled public charge; a label many Haitian immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, believe could hinder their ability to obtain legal status in the United State. As a result, many avoid resources that they are eligible to receive (Bronstein & Kelly, 1998). Haitian immigrants are also known to disengage in community collaborations even after agreements have been signed and implemented (Mateyer, Jean- Louis & Madison, 2004).

Studies reveal that Haitian immigrants were discriminated against by U.S service providers. In seeking resources, Haitian immigrants endured long waiting times, slow response rates, absence of translators or of Haitian service providers, stigma of AIDS, and a general perception of Haitian immigrants, as poor, illiterate, and voodoo worshippers (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Kretsedemas, 2003; Kretsedemas, 2004; Mateyer, Jean-Louis & Madison, 2004; Santana & Dancy, 2000). Given these aforementioned factors coupled with a strong sense of pride, self-reliance and a need for personal privacy, the family unit becomes the initial point of reference for Haitian immigrants (Albertini & Barsky, 2003, Bastien 1998).

In addition, many Haitian immigrants have strong ties to Voodoo. The belief in Voodoo shapes the Haitian psyche and empowers Haitian immigrants to feel a sense of control over their destiny (Desrosiers & St. Fleurose, 2002). Their help-seeking behavior

is influenced by natural and supernatural causes to life challenges. As a result, many Haitian immigrants seek services through nontraditional sources, such folk healers or folk medicine (Holcomb & collaborators, 1996). This form of help-seeking behavior impacts Haitian immigrants relationships with formal institutions and may create barriers to seeking needed and available resources.

In their study on Haitian immigrants' access to HIV /AIDS services, Albertini and Barsky (2003) found that shame and the need to avoid situations which might create shameful feelings had a negative impact to accessing health care. Latta and Goodman (2005) identified the cultural view of violence has having an impact Haitian immigrant women's access to mainstream services as victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The authors conducted 15 qualitative interviews with three groups of service providers in a northeastern city and its surrounding areas. These service providers were identified as mainstream domestic violence service providers, some domestic violence related service providers and Haitian service providers. The latter represented service providers who, as members of the Haitian community provided information on Haitian culture (Latta & Goodman, 2005). The Haitian service participants identified several contextual factors that influenced Haitian immigrant women's responses and understanding of violence. Haitian immigrant women had learned to view violence as something to endure as opposed to something to escape. Haitian immigrant women's willingness to access mainstream services is compromised by contextual factors in Haiti such as the virtual absence of social services and police intervention on issues of domestic violence.

*Familiarity with resources.* Given the limited access to modern facilities such as medical and social institutions in Haiti, many Haitian immigrants arrive in the United

States with limited knowledge or familiarity of available supportive resources. Portes and collaborators (1992) determined that macro-contextual factors in country of origin heavily influenced Cuban and Haitian refugees' knowledge of and access to mental health services in the United States. Cubans who arrived in the United States with prior knowledge of mental disorders and mental health services had a much higher utilization rate than their Haitian counterparts. Haitians' utilization of such services prior to arrival was for the most part non-existent. Portes and collaborators also found that prior knowledge of mental health delivery system in country of origin, impacts whether immigrants become knowledgeable of the mental health delivery system in their host country.

In fact, during the 1980's, Haitian immigrants arrived in the United States under difficult circumstances, in the absence of co-ethnic support and culturally appropriate services and with little socialization to mental health service delivery in Haiti. Their lack of familiarity with mental health resources kept many from accessing mental health services in the United States, and therefore what needs they may have had were not addressed.

Similarly, Ryan and collaborators (2004) found that many Haitians were unaware of the resources available to them. This lack of knowledge was further compounded by a belief that without health insurance no services would be available. This study identified the need for an improved communication between health services providers and Haitian immigrants to ensure greater knowledge of services.



## Review of Studies on the Relationship between Social Class and Help-Seeking Behaviors

Immigrants enter a host country by diverse modes of incorporation depending upon such factors as familiarity with host society, context of reception, language proficiency, immigration status, education and job skills. These factors often determine their access and utilization of resources. Poorer and less skilled immigrants tend to enter informal labor markets where low pay and absence of health and other fringe benefits puts immigrants at risk for poverty, residential segregation into impoverished neighborhoods and limits their upward mobility. These factors are shown to impact immigrants' access and utilization of supportive resources, and as a result they underutilize formal resources. Undocumented immigrants are at greater risk of underutilizing formal resources given fears of deportation, eligibility requirements and poverty.

On the other hand, immigrants with more marketable skills, education and familiarity with host cultures are able to resist the downward pull of assimilation. They access better jobs with better benefits, they live in middle class communities and they have more access to native communities. Their higher socioeconomic status makes access and utilization of supportive resources less challenging (Chavez et al., 1992).

Immigrants' socioeconomic status SES is discussed in several help-seeking studies and defined as income, occupation and wealth (Lui, 2004; Williams & Collins, 1995). Chavez et al. (1992) discussed the impact of class differences as reflected by documented versus undocumented Mexican immigrants on health coverage and utilization of health services. The immigrants' lower SES limited access to resources, as many worked in informal sectors of the labor markets and experienced economic

constraints. According to this study, the concept of class provides a lens from which to observe the political, economic and social benefits offered to specific groups in society. Much like immigration status, class also determines access and availability of supportive resources.

Marshall et al. (2005) examined the impact of documented and undocumented Latino Women's socio-demographic characteristics on access and utilization of health resources by. The socio-demographic characteristics included cultural and social factors of ethnicity, language, education, income and work conditions. The results of the study were based on secondary data obtained through a cross sectional study of 325 Latino adults. The respondents from the secondary data were Latino men and women 18 years or older and born in a Spanish speaking country. For the purpose of this study only women were chosen from the secondary data, therefore the actual sample size consisted of 197 Latino immigrant women. The results of the study indicated that undocumented Latino women who reported lower education and income levels, were less likely to access to health care. Furthermore, undocumented women were vulnerable to poorer health outcomes due to cultural and linguistic barriers, financial constraints and education levels.

Hamilton et al. (2006) analyzed the health care utilization and health coverage of first generation Mexican children in the United States. The findings indicated that ethnic and racial disparities in access to health resources are partly and in some instances fully explained by parental discrepancies in socioeconomic status, income, education, employment and relationship status. According to the authors, the lack of health insurance among U.S. born children of Mexican immigrants may be explained by factors

impacting their parents, specifically language barriers, socioeconomic status, lack of familiarity with U.S. resources, work schedules and transportation (Hamilton et al., 2006).

In the context of Haitian immigrants, although help-seeking studies discuss SES, they do not examine social class as a cultural construct. Albertini and Barsky (2003) identified several barriers to Haitian immigrants' access to HIV resources. These barriers included socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, education, employment, transportation, sensitivity of health care provider, immigration status, stigma of being Haitian and privacy. Higher levels of education and SES facilitated Haitian immigrants' access to health resources. Haitian immigrants with higher SES had a greater knowledge and acceptance of U.S. mainstream services. Many of these immigrants arrived in the United States having received regular medical check-ups in Haiti, often through personal doctors. However, Haitian immigrants from lower SES underutilized health resources. Many were unaccustomed to seeking regular health resources in Haiti, or did so only during critical times. These same help-seeking patterns were observed in the United States among Haitian immigrants from lower SES in the United States (Albertini & Barsky, 2003).

Saint-Jean and Crandall (2005) found that Haitian immigrants' from lower SES were more likely to underutilization preventive care, specifically Haitian immigrants who lacked a high school education and who had a family income of less than \$31,000. There were 210 interviews conducted and information was gathered on 680 residents. The sample was equally divided between male and female and more than half were under the age of 35. Some Haitian immigrants had insurance and were proficient in the English

language, some were permanent residents and others were refugees, and most had lived in the United States for more than a decade (Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005).

The study revealed that Haitian immigrants face distinct health needs and daunting challenges as they attempt to meet those needs. They arrive in the United States with few resources and limited finances and skills. Their immigration and adaptation processes are difficult and little is known of their health status and health care issues.

Holcombe and collaborators (1996) found that SES dictates Haitian immigrant's utilization of time or temporal orientation and subsequently impacts their help-seeking behavior. In this respect, higher SES Haitian immigrants tend to be future oriented, they plan for the future and see the possibilities of a better way of life, whereas lower SES Haitian immigrants tend to be present or past oriented as such preventive care or proactive help-seeking patterns may have little impact on their day to day life (Holcombe & collaborators, 1996). In this context, present or past oriented Haitians may present with later stage symptoms of illness, not having planned or practiced preventive patterns of help-seeking.

In summary, this chapter presented the findings of immigrant help-seeking studies in the United States and abroad and the findings of Haitian immigrant help-seeking studies conducted in the United States. The chapter concluded with help-seeking studies and the influence of SES on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior in the United States. Several immigrant help-seeking studies found a positive correlation between help-seeking and SES. However, there is an absence of Haitian immigrant help-seeking studies which discuss the influence of social class as a cultural construct on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior in the United States. Furthermore, help-seeking literature indicates

limited research on Haitian immigrants, specifically the realities of Haitian immigrants of higher social standing.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Design of the Qualitative Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine social class as a cultural construct and the help-seeking behaviors of Haitian immigrants in the United States. Specifically, this study was based on the experiences of Haitian immigrants who arrived during the four largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States and who represented different social class composition. Although literature suggests that Haitian social structure is clearly understood by all Haitians, little is known of how its interpretation manifests itself in Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior. In an attempt to examine the meaning of social class in the context of Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior, I undertook an exploratory and qualitative research study. The chapter presents the research questions, and provides a theoretical framework for immigrant assimilation processes. The conceptual framework is presented as are a description of the exploratory qualitative design used in this study. The final sections covers the data analysis procedures used to address the study's research questions.

### **Research Questions**

There are limited empirical studies on Haitian immigrants. And in social work research there are no theoretical works on the influence of social class as a cultural construct on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behaviors in the United States. Therefore, this study is added to existing empirical literature on the Haitian immigrant help-seeking behavior and social work practice by providing. To achieve this objective, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1) Do cultural beliefs/perceptions about help-seeking of Haitian immigrants vary by period of immigration?
- 2) If those beliefs are not commonly held, what factors contribute to the discrepancies? If those beliefs are commonly held beliefs, how were they developed? How are they maintained in the United States?
- 3) Does social class play a significant role in Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behavior in Haiti, in the United States? If so, how?
- 4) Does social class play a significant role in Haitian immigrants' utilization of social resources? If so how?
- 5) How significant is the role of social class as a cultural construct on the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants compared to factors of language proficiency, sensitivity of service providers, immigration status, education and context of arrival?

### Theoretical Framework

Segmented assimilation serves as the theoretical framework for this study. I introduced this theoretical framework to provide a context from which to understand and discuss social class differences as a significant factor in the process of immigrant resettlement. Historically immigrants were expected to assimilate to the dominant U.S. culture regardless of their pre-immigration experiences. The process of assimilation was sought to be the natural outcome of immigrant adaptation. It was conceptualized as a gradual and uniform process of upward mobility. Immigrant would merge into the U.S. mainstream culture, perceived as a “homogenous or standard form of American culture”

(Gibson, 2001, p.19) as they voluntarily abandoned their own unique cultural identity (Green, 1999; Portes et al., 1992; Schaefer, 2006).

However, more recent studies on immigrant assimilation have conceptualized assimilation as segmented (Portes, Fernández-Kelly & Haller, 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1994). In this context, immigrants do not follow a uniform pattern of adaptation as predicated by the earlier theories of assimilation. Instead, immigrants' adaptation is recognized as contingent upon several factors. These factors include which pre-migration experiences social standing, educational attainment, occupational skills, and familiarity with western culture and whether their decision to migrate was voluntary or involuntary (Fong, 2004; Gibson, 2001). Their adaptation is further compounded by problems in the host country such as changes in labor markets, deindustrialization, language barriers, immigration status, poverty, racism, and resettlement communities. (Fong, 2004; Gibson, 2001). These factors are particularly prevalent among immigrants who arrived following the 1965 Immigration Act.

Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, the United States witnessed an influx of immigrants from Asia, the West Indies, Central America, the Middle East, and Africa (Arias-King, 2003; Drachman, 1995; Goldsboro, 2000; Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). For many of these non-white immigrants, their adaptation is affected by racial discrimination and exclusion. While some immigrants follow a more traditional path of assimilation and upward move to middle class integration, many others remain at the bottom of the economic ladder (Gibson, 2001). Those who remain at the bottom of the economic ladder are often poor, unskilled and lack economic resources. As a result, many are forced to live in urban neighborhoods with high rates of unemployment, crime and



poverty (Portes & Rumbault, 1996). Assimilation is therefore not uniform as historically thought but segmented.

In segmented assimilation, immigrant groups assimilate to a particular sector of the dominant society and this sector then influences their social and economic mobility (Portes & Zhou, 1994). Segmented assimilation is described by three contrasting modes of acculturation: 1) linear assimilation, 2) accommodation and acculturation without assimilation, and 3) downward assimilation (Gibson, 1988; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1994; Portes, 1994; Portes & Rumbault, 1996). For example Cuban exiles, engaged in a linear form of assimilation. Their pre-migration experiences as members of a more affluent social class coupled with receptive U.S. immigration policies allowed them to easily integrate into U.S. society and advance in all levels of social, political and economic life. Indian “Punjabi” immigrants to the United Kingdom exhibited the second mode of segmented assimilation, which is accommodation and acculturation without assimilation. They adapted to the host culture while creating a strong ethnic enclave (Gibson, 1998; Gibson & Bhachu, 1991).

Many Haitian immigrants in the United States experienced downward assimilation. This third mode of segmented assimilation keeps many Haitian immigrants trapped in poverty. Their lack of English language proficiency, limited job skills and low levels of education maintain Haitian immigrants at the bottom of the economic ladder. They find themselves in urban centers, particularly inner city neighborhood with high rates of crime, unemployment and poverty that limit their upward mobility (Portes & Zhou, 1994, Portes & Rumbault, 1996). The “Little Haiti” section of Miami is considered the largest Black Ghetto in the United States. As Black immigrants, Haitian immigrants

also experience the challenges faced by other Black people in the United States. These challenges include discrimination, poverty, and racism (Portes & Zhou, 1994).

However, Haitian immigrants arrived in four large waves of Haitian immigration to the United States and each wave represented a different social class composition and different mode of assimilation. First and second wave Haitian immigrants, of higher social class standing appear to have experienced a more linear form of assimilation, while Haitian immigrants from the latter two waves, representing a lower class standing were more likely to experience downward assimilation.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is grounded in the theoretical perspective of social class as a cultural construct. This theoretical perspective considers how social class is framed within cultural norms and how it influences help-seeking behaviors. Typically, social class in help-seeking studies is reflected by the variable of socioeconomic status SES. This variable is defined by demographic indices of income, occupation and education which organize individuals into a hierarchical framework of lower, middle and upper class (Lui, Soleck, Hopps, Dunston & Pickett, 2004; Williams & Collins, 1995).

This study recognizes that the concept of social class is much broader than SES. SES is limited and fails to explain social class differences based on factors other than income, education and occupation indicators whereas social class predicts variations which exist within and between social groups in a variety of contexts including living conditions and life chances, material resources and privilege and power. Social class creates class privilege. This form of privilege ensures that factors such as “wealth, power, opportunity and privilege go hand in hand” (Rothenberg, 2001, p.97). Social class is

considered a key determinant of future success above hard work, determination and intelligence. According to Williams and Collins (1995), “Social class has proven to be remarkably robust in elucidating the complexities of social and historical processes” (p.3).

Most individuals acquire an understanding of their social class standing through multiple contexts beyond these factors. These contexts include cultural values and behaviors, social networks, environment, attitudes and privilege (Lui et al., 2004; Rothenberg, 2001). In Haitian society, social class is defined by indices of SES and additional culturally specific indices of language, comportment, and family name.

Therefore, a further examination of social class as a cultural construct may provide social workers with additional context in by which to understand how Haitian immigrants become aware of, seek out, perceive, and accept social resources in their attempts to navigate their adaptation process. In examining social class as a cultural construct, the conceptual framework hopes to provide answers to the following questions

- 1) Haitian social class is a construct that is clearly understood by Haitian immigrants, then what role, if any does it play in their help-seeking behaviors.
- 2) Given the many indices that culturally define Haitian social class, which one, if any is more influential on help-seeking behaviors?
- 3) Has membership in a social class impacted Haitian immigrants’ behavior when seeking social, health, mental health resources?

## Exploratory Qualitative Design

This study is based on an exploratory format. My purpose in choosing an exploratory research format was to examine a “new interest,” explore a subject that is “relatively new and unstudied,” “test the feasibility of undertaking a study” and develop methods to be used in a more in-depth study (Rubin & Babbie, 2002, p.123).

As previously stated, the examination of social class as a cultural construct in the context of Haitian immigrant help-seeking behavior is understudied in social scientific research as are Haitian immigrants, specifically in social work research. A review of literature indicates that social class is typically referenced under socioeconomic status SES. And, more often than not SES is defined by education, occupation and income.

In fact, SES was mentioned in several studies on Haitian immigrants as a factor influencing help-seeking behavior and access to health services (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Saint-Jean & Crandall, 2005). These studies employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods; however, the outcomes were based solely on the help-seeking behaviors of third and fourth wave Haitian immigrants. Although these Haitian immigrants represent the largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States, their social class composition is distinct from Haitian immigrants who arrived during the first and second waves, prior to 1980. Most Haitian immigrants who arrived during the first and second waves belonged to a higher social class standing than their third and fourth wave counterparts.

Therefore, in order to conduct a more comprehensive of Haitian immigrants in the context social class and help-seeking it was important to obtain an in depth perspective of Haitian immigrants across all four waves of Haitian immigration to the United States. In

recognizing this distinction, I chose a qualitative research design. The qualitative research design allowed me to engage in a substantive and intimate rapport with participants from all four waves of Haitian immigration to the United States, 1957, 1970, 1980 and 1991. This level of substantive and intimate engagement is the cornerstone of qualitative research.

Unlike quantitative research that seeks to produce research findings that are precise and generalizable, qualitative research attempts to explore social and human problems based on various methods of inquiry, most notably biography, case study, ethnography and grounded theory (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). These various methods of inquiry require that the qualitative researcher conduct research, and collect data in a natural setting and that phenomenon be interpreted according to the meaning given by those under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As such, the researcher is required to 1) devote extensive time and resource in the field, 2) engage in complex and time consuming data analysis, 3) commit to writing long passages to ensure the accuracy of multiple perspectives and 4) engage in research without firm guidelines and specific procedures (Creswell, 1998).

For the purpose of this study, I employed a grounded theory research design. Grounded theory research design was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is a qualitative research design intended to generate or discover a new theory in relation to a phenomenon or particular situation (Creswell, 1998; Rubin & Babbie, 2001). The development of a theory in relation to the phenomenon under study is “grounded” from data systematically collected and analyzed in the research process (Creswell, 1998, Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical hypotheses

or propositions are generated based on data collected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon via interviews and field visits. In the final analysis a theory is generated.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), “A theory denotes a set of well-developed categories (e.g. themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationships to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon” (p.22). The researcher does not engage in research with a “preconceived theory in mind” or “a priori” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12). Instead, the researcher focuses on a particular area and allows the theory to emerge from the data. In keeping with this methodological approach, no preconceived theory was presented. Instead, the words and meanings offered by Haitian immigrant participants (who represent various social classes) as to their understanding of social class and help-seeking behavior was collected and analyzed. The data was constantly compared against emerging themes and analyzed using an open, axial and selective coding format.

In analyzing and coding my data, I maintained a level of objectivity and sensitivity. I remained open, engaged and committed to accurately reflecting participants lived experiences. In the process of conducting research, grounded theory requires the researcher to maintain a level of objectivity, to be open and willing to listen to respondents and accurately reflect their lived realities (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It also requires that the researcher be sensitive to the meaning of the data, have insight and recognize what is taking place beneath the obvious. The research must self-reflect and recognize his/her own cultural filters as information is gathered and analyzed, to

minimize researcher biases. The importance of recognizing my own cultural lens was eminent in the research process. I was the child of an immigrant from the first wave of Haitian immigration, and my understanding of Haitian culture was derived from this background. A background and perspective that was far different than many of the participants in this study.

Grounded theory suggests that the researcher employ several techniques to limit the intrusion of bias while retaining sensitivity to the information presented. These techniques include thinking comparatively, gaining distance to obtain multiple viewpoints, gathering information through various mediums, interviews, records and reports, verifying information with respondents to determine whether the researcher's interpretation reflects their experiences, and if not find out why, maintaining an attitude of skepticism and finally following the research procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research process the researcher should hope to develop the following skills:

1. The ability to step back and critically analyze situations
2. The ability to recognize the tendency toward bias
3. The ability to think abstractly
4. The ability to be flexible and open to helpful criticism
5. Sensitivity to words and actions of respondents
6. A sense of absorption and devotion to the work process ( Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.7)

I followed these directives in conducting my own research. It was important that I maintain a facilitative role, as well as that of a learner. I wanted participants to feel in control of their perspective, their words and their understanding. I remained observant of

my surroundings and the dynamics that took place between participants, translators and me, the researcher.

### *Research Protocol*

*Research site.* Given the diverse location of Haitian immigrants across the United States, I attempted to find a research site that could ensure participation from all four waves of Haitian immigration. South Florida met this criterion. Therefore, South Florida was the chosen research site, specifically, West Palm Beach in Broward County and Miami in Dade County. The South Florida region includes a large concentration of Haitian immigrants from the third and fourth waves as well as first and second wave Haitian immigrants who migrated south from the northern U.S. cities of New York, Boston and Chicago.

*Inclusion criteria.* The study confined to Haitian immigrants who arrived in the United States during one of the four largest waves of Haitian immigration, specifically 1957-1969, 1970-1979, 1980-1989 and 1991- 1995. Although all four waves of Haitian immigrants will represented, only Haitian immigrants who arrived at the age of 20 years or older will be considered for participation in this study, therefore, participants may range in age from 35 to 80 years.

I chose 20 years or older to ensure that participants had spent their formative years in Haiti, prior to immigrating to the United States. I wanted to make sure that they were able to discuss the realities in Haiti at the time of their departure and the realities in the United States at the time of arrival and beyond. This age criterion also helped ensure that participants had a better grasp on Haitian cultural nuances and their place in the Haitian social structure.



*Recruitment process.* Upon the approval of the University of Texas at Austin's Internal Review Board, I contacted representatives from the Miami Dade County Board of Education and the Haitian Women of Miami Organization. The Miami Dade Board of Education oversees the administration of schools with high concentration of children of Haitian descent. The Haitian Women of Miami Organization is located in "Little Haiti" and provides social resources to Haitian immigrants in the areas of employment, immigration, social services, job readiness and parenting skills.

I traveled to Miami and met representatives of these organizations in person. On-going contact with representatives continued via email and telephone contact throughout the research process. In addition, I also approached an informant, an individual with ties to my family, to request assistance in recruiting participants.

The informant recruited participants from the first wave. The informant arrived in the United States during the first wave of Haitian immigration, had lived in New York, and retired in South Florida. This informant knew many other Haitian immigrants who followed the same trajectory and were now living in South Florida. The informant contacted participants and organized the meeting site for the first wave focus group

Participants from the second, third and fourth waves of Haitian immigration were recruited with the assistance of representatives from the Miami Dade County Board of Education and the Haitian Women of Miami Organization. I chose the Haitian Women of Miami Organization based on a previous interaction with the Executive Director. Since I did not live in the research sites, I sent a list of inclusion criteria to each recruiter in an effort to identify participants for the study. This list of inclusion criteria consisted period of immigration, participant age and whether participants had lived their formative years

in Haiti. The recruiters were directed to inform potential participants of the study and confirm participation.

*Sample size.* According to Creswell (1998), grounded theory studies require long interviews with at least 20 -30 participants. The sample size also depends on the saturation of units of information whereby no new categories or themes are identified. Ideally, I hoped to recruit at least 40 participants for the study. I wanted 10 participants for each wave of Haitian immigration and an equal distribution of male and female participants. Given the possibility that some Haitian immigrants' may be reluctant to participate in a study, an effort was made to over recruit in the hopes of getting at least 40 participants. I recruited 43 participants for the study, 12 representing the first wave, 11 the second wave, 9 the third wave and 11 the fourth wave.

*Sampling methods.* I employed non-probability purposive and snowball sampling methods to ensure that participants met inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling was utilized ensure inclusion in terms of period of immigration, participant age and whether participants had lived their formative years in Haiti. Snowball sampling was used to identify individuals able to connect with and recruit participants who were not readily identifiable to the researcher Snowball sampling was employed to address potential barriers to participation such as, immigration status, issues of privacy and issues of distrust for formal or perceived formal government entities. Using this method, an informant located and recruited first wave participants and a recruiter from Haitian Women of Miami Organization asked an informant to locate participants from the informant's congregation and residential neighborhood in Little Haiti, Miami.

*Screening process.* The screening of participants took place in two phases. In the first phase, recruiters contacted or asked participants to take part in the study weeks prior to the initial focus groups/ interviews. This was done by telephone contact or in person. The second phase took place the day of the focus group/individual interviews. During this phase, consent forms were read out loud and participants completed a demographic questionnaire prior to the start of the focus groups/interviews. In addition, the Creole speaking translator and I discussed the risks and benefits of participation. This process allowed participants to make a more informed decision as to their willingness to participate in the study and this process also protected the privacy of participants unable to read or write in English or French. Once the screening of participants was completed, focus groups/individual interviews were conducted. There were three participants who did not meet inclusion criteria of having lived their formative years in Haiti and were therefore denied participation in the study. One participant completed a consent form and left immediately after the start of one of the focus groups. It was later determined that this participant had another scheduled appointment elsewhere. This participant's consent form was subsequently destroyed.

#### *Data Collection*

The data collection was conducted in three languages, English, French and Haitian Creole. The data material included a consent form, demographic questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide and field notes. The consent forms were reviewed in English, French and Haitian Creole prior to obtaining participants' consent. The demographic questionnaire was written in English and French and had three subcategories, 1) immigration background, 2) current status in the United States, and 3)

background in Haiti. Participants were given the choice to complete either an English or French version of the demographic questionnaire. Semi-structured focus group/individual interviews were conducted in English, French and Haitian Creole. The focus groups and individual interviews were audio-taped following the completion of the consent forms and demographic questionnaire. Participants did not express any discomforts in this process.

*Demographic questionnaire.* The demographic questionnaire obtained background information on the participants' pre-migration and post-migration experience. It also attempted to provide an initial assessment of participants' social class standing by SES indices of education, occupation, and income, and culturally specific indices of French language proficiency and residential background in Haiti.

I employed a back-translation method in developing the questionnaire. The English version was translated in French by native Haitian and Canadian French speaking translators. It was then reviewed by a Haitian Creole translator who had a strong command of English, French and Creole languages. Once I obtained feedback from all three translators, the questionnaire was revised and further translated in Haitian French to ensure correctness of terminology. It should be noted that the Canadian French speaking translator lives in Haiti and has an extensive familiarity with the Haitian culture and language. The process of back-translation ensured greater consistency. A further attempt was made to translate the questionnaire in Haitian Creole by a Haitian Creole translator in Miami; however, this process was not completed and was found not to be needed for the purpose of this study.

*Semi-structured interview protocol.* The study used a semi-structured interview protocol to provide some guidance and consistency across all focus groups and individual interviews. The protocol consisted of open-ended questions. The questions were framed in such a way as to capture participants' pre-migration and post-migration experiences, their level of privilege in Haiti, in the context of language, education and residential background and their understanding of Haitian social structure. The open-ended question format allowed participants to fully express their experiences and perspectives. I asked the same question in the same sequence for each focus group/individual interview.

Pilot interviews were conducted prior to developing the semi-structured interview protocol. These interviews provided valuable perspectives, particularly in assessing Haitian immigrants' social class standing, conveying the help-seeking concept and help-seeking behaviors, and issues of privacy. The pilot interviews helped me strengthen the research questions. I was able to clarify culturally specific terminology and approach my questions in such a way as to ensure that participants' understood and remained engaged in the research process. The interviews also allowed me to experience first-hand Haitian immigrants' resistance or reluctance to share information about their immigration experiences and their culture.

During the interviews I was often asked why this information was needed; one interviewee appeared irritated, and seemed to feel that my questions were demeaning. For example when I asked the participant how he had obtained employment in the United States, the initial response was "What do you mean how did I obtain employment? Like everyone else, I went and applied and got a job in a factory." "Many who did not speak the language worked in factories." It was only when I probed further as to how someone

who does not speak the language could find employment in this manner did the interviewee mention that a family member who worked in this particular factory in New York was able to get the interviewee a job.

In this same interview, the interviewee denied any experience of racism or discrimination based on skin color/race and seemed to feel insulted at the notion that this could have been something experienced. In response, the interviewee talked about being Haitian, family upbringing, and education and almost dared anyone to discriminate against him. As a result the question was re-worded to ask if participants ever felt discriminated against because they were of Haitian descent and not Black.

I also asked a question about depression and help-seeking, the interviewee informed me that Haitians do not use the term “depressed” and would not know how to respond to this question. Instead, the interviewee suggested that a term like “problems” be used in place of “depressed.”

The semi-structured interview protocol explored the following areas, Haitian immigrants’ help-seeking experiences in the United States, help-seeking experiences in a country other than the United States or Haiti, Haitian social class factors, help-seeking experiences in Haiti and finally Haitian immigrants’ perspective on seeking supportive resources in the United States after the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

*Field notes.* During the course of each focus group/individual interviews, I kept field notes. These notes highlighted discussion topics, noted changes in participants’ affect, level of engagement and identified salient research questions that resulted in a heightened level of engagement. For example, in discussing help-seeking in the context arrival or discussing Haitian cultural terms that denote social class standing, participants

were particularly vocal. As well, participants laughed or giggled when asked about seeking resources from the Haitian government, and often responded by saying “what help?” Field notes provided supportive documentation to the audio-tapes and translator feedback.

### *Data Collection Process*

Data collection took place during four, two- hour focus groups and 12, 60 minute face to face interviews. At the beginning of each focus group and interview, I introduced the study and discussed its purpose. I also reviewed the consent form, ethical considerations and issues of confidentiality and anonymity. I informed participants that the sessions would be recorded to ensure greater accuracy of information and responses and pointed to the location of two mini audio cassettes used for the recording. I asked participants if they had any objections to my use of the audio cassettes and participants did not express any issues or objections.

Once I obtained participants’ verbal agreement, they were then directed to complete a demographic questionnaire. During some of the focus groups/individual interviews, agency personnel and/or translators assisted participants in completing the paperwork. The agency personnel and/or translators further clarified the study as well as their role in the research process. I assessed participants’ comfort level and reminded participants that their presence was voluntary and that should they chose to leave the study, at any time, they would not be subject to any negative consequences. I also informed participants that they would receive a monetary incentive in the amount of \$20.00 for their participation. The focus groups/individual interviews began once this process was completed.

Each focus group/individual interview was audio-taped. Participants did not express any discomforts in this process. I kept assessing participants' level of engagement and comfort using verbal and nonverbal cues. These cues included eye contact, smiling, asking if participants felt comfortable and supporting participants' responses. I repeated this process throughout the focus groups /interview.

The intent of these focus groups/ individual interviews is to bring life to the factors which influence Haitian immigrant help-seeking behaviors by probing participants until the categories, or units of information are saturated (Creswell, 1998). As indicated in a grounded theory approach, I had a general plan of inquiry, or plan for asking questions. These questions became more refined as the research process evolved (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Typically, in a grounded theory approach the questions posed or words used have no specific order (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). As information was gathered, I made comparisons at the property and dimensional levels. In the grounded theory approach, the purpose in making comparisons is to rely on what is already known to help in understanding what is not known, "...people...draw on what they know to try and understand what they do not know" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.80). The responses to questions and the properties and dimensions of comparisons are not data, but tools which help to better understand a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this process, I noted certain patterns, which helped me probe further into questions.

*Focus groups and individual interview conditions.* Given the participants' potential for resistance due to issues of distrust, and a strong sense of privacy, the need to build rapport was critical. Recruiters and informants also discussed the importance of building rapport by protecting participants' privacy. They expressed the need for



participants to feel comfortable in the research process, specifically the need for participants to feel protected given their immigration status, their language barrier and their lack of familiarity with research in general. As a result, many of the participants recruited for the focus groups/individual interviews (from the second, third and fourth waves of Haitian immigration) had some knowledge of the Haitian Women of Miami Organization or were acquainted with someone who used the agency's resources prior to participating in the research.

I also began each focus group/individual interview by sharing my personal perspective on the study and its relevance to my background as a child of Haitian immigrants. My familiarity with Haiti, having spent some of childhood there and on-going travels seemed to build a connection with the participants, particularly those from the latter waves, who were sometimes surprised to learn that I was of Haitian descent.

Participants could choose to participate in either a focus group or face to face interview. They could also choose their preferred location of participation 1) home, 2) Haitian Women of Miami Organization or 3) North Miami Senior High School conference room. Most of the focus groups/ interviews were conducted at Haitian Women of Miami Organization. 43 Haitian immigrants participated in the study, 31 in the focus groups and 12 individual interviews. A breakdown of the participants by focus group/ individual interviews is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Participant Breakdown by Focus Group/Individual Interview

Haitian Immigration Waves by Period of Immigration	# of Focus Group Participants	# of Individual Interview Participants	Total
1 (1957-1969)	12	0	12
2 (1970-1979)	4	7	11
3 (1980-1989)	4	5	9
4 (1990-1995)	10	1	11

*First wave focus group- private home.* The first wave focus group took place in the first wave informant's residence. Most of the participants arrived as couples and half consented to participate in the interview, the majority of participants were males. Ethical considerations were discussed prior to the start of the focus group as were participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time with impunity. I discussed issues of confidentiality and anonymity and answered all of the participants' questions.

I monitored participants' reactions throughout the interview process to assess their level of comfort, level of engagement by identifying participants' nonverbal cues and affect. There seemed to be an initial reluctance for open discussion, however as the interview progressed, the level of engagement increased as participants' interests were peaked by the content of the discussion. Although most of the women remained quiet, a couple of them did eventually share their perspectives. Some participants expressed concern as to the length of the focus group process, however at the two hour mark; they were all still present and still heavily engaged.

At times, it felt like a reunion, participants sharing aspects of their lives that occurred more than 40 years ago. The focus group was conducted in English, given that

all the participants had lived in the United States for over 40 years and had a strong command of the English language.

*Second, third and fourth wave focus groups – Haitian Women of Miami*

*Organization.* The second, third and fourth wave focus groups took place in a conference room at the Haitian Women of Miami Organization and the individual interviews were conducted in private offices located throughout the building. The majority of the individual interviews were conducted with second wave Haitian immigrants. The focus groups and interviews went smoothly in large part due to the participants' familiarity with the recruiters and the Haitian Women of Miami Organization as a whole.

I facilitated the focus groups along with a male or female Haitian Creole speaking translator. I led the focus groups in English and French, and when necessary, referred to the Creole speaking translators for Creole only speaking participants. The use of Haitian Creole speaking translators assured greater accuracy of participants' responses and assisted me in conveying the research questions and clarifying any language or cultural barriers.

At times, keeping participants engaged posed a challenge. Participants expressed concerns with the length of time, prior and during the focus groups and at times, participants asked the translator questions about the agency's resources. On a few occasions, non-research participants entered the conference room looking for agency personnel and had to be re-directed. However, for the most part, participants remained engaged, and encouraged each other to share their experiences.

*Interviews- private home and offices.* The individual interviews took place in two locations. Two interviews were conducted in a private home in Miami and 10 interviews

were conducted in private offices at the Haitian Women of Miami Organization. The recruiter from the he Miami Dade Board of Education coordinated the two private home interviews. Prior to the individual interviews, the recruiter informed me that the participants had a strong command of the English language. I was then able to conduct the interviews in English, however at times some French and Haitian Creole was incorporated to ensure that I had understood the information more accurately.

The private home individual interviews were conducted with a participant from the second wave and one from the third wave of Haitian immigration. The interview took place in the residence's family room. The interviews went smoothly. There was no outside interruption, with the exception of an occasional cell phone ring, for which the participants were very apologetic. Both participants appeared comfortable. They came at the request of the recruiter and appeared pleasantly surprised by my knowledge of Haiti as they once knew Haiti to be, before the earthquake and before the departure of "Baby" Doc as President of Haiti. It seemed that this shared knowledge of Haiti in the 1970's allowed me to build rapport with the participants. Participants were given the choice of meeting with me privately, however they wanted to remain in the room and so I conducted the interviews with both present.

The other 10 individual interviews took place in the private offices of the Haitian Women of Miami Organization. They all went well. In fact, it seemed that many of those interviewed were eager to share their perspective, and did so at length. One interview was conducted in French and all other interviews were conducted in English. At times, participants responded in French or Haitian Creole as a means of reaffirming what they had shared in English. I understood them well, and did not need a translator.

## Data Analysis

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

I analyzed the data using a grounded theory approach. A grounded theory approach begins with a microscopic examination of the data. In this process, analysis is not structured or rigid but instead free flowing and creative (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It requires the researcher to analyze data, “often sentence by sentence... of the field note, interview, or the document” (Strauss, 1987, p. 22). There is a constant process of comparison, so that the researcher may collect and analyze data to produce a grounded theory (Strauss, 1987). Included in this examination are two key aspects of analysis, data as collected through interviews, field notes, videos, journals, memos and presented by the participants, and the observer’s interpretation of the data. It also includes the interplay between participant and researcher as data is gathered and analyzed. In this instance, the researcher is actively engaged in the data gathering process, which to some extent compromises the level of objectivity. However, the grounded theory approach recognizes that the researcher’s own knowledge and experience creates a sensitivity to the issues or problems which may be found in the data. In the process of this careful examination, categories are developed according to three sequential coding types, open, axial and selective coding. Open coding occurs when the researcher begins to review the data. It requires the researcher to “open up the text and expose the thoughts, ideas and meanings contained therein” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.102). Data is critically reviewed, analyzed and compared for similarities and differences. As data is analyzed, they are categorized based on similar meaning or concepts. These concepts represent labeled phenomenon. A labeled phenomenon is an abstract representation of an event, action, object, or action/

interaction” that are considered significant by the respondents (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 103).

During the open coding process, I examined my data line by line, and began to formulate concepts according to their properties, or recognizable characteristics based on their similarities and differences. These concepts were continuously re-examined as new data emerged from my ongoing research, and then grouped into abstract concepts called categories. These categories were further examined and gave way to the creation of subcategories. The creation of subcategories reduced my initial concepts, brought more clarity to the data presented and made the data more manageable. It also provided a context that allowed me to gain a better understanding of what was taking place within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

As I continued to review the data, I began to develop hypothesis as to what might be taking place, what might be revealing itself, I started to engage in axial coding. The primary goal of axial coding is to develop categories in a systematic way and assess how the categories relate to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this process, I explored the interrelationship of categories and rearranged them and linked them to their subcategories to provide a more accurate representation of the data. I reflected on the information gathered and began to ask the where, why, how, how come, when, with what questions. In this process, I related the structure (why?) with the process (how?).

In the final coding process, selective coding, I began to integrate the categories and refine them based on my continued critical examination of the information obtained. In grounded theory approach, it is during the selective coding process that a central category or theme is identified. This central category bridges all other categories to form

an explanation. It has analytical power (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), certain factors must be considered when developing the central category. Specifically 1) how often the theme appears in the data, 2) whether all categories can be related back to the central category in a logical and consistent way, 3) whether it has the ability to predict, to explain, 4) if it is abstract enough to be used in future research, in other substantive areas and 5) whether it can explain variations and main points, contradiction and alternative cases in terms of the central idea (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 147). It was during the selective coding process that I recognized an emerging theme. As categories were examined and re-examined, it became evident that a repeating theme had started to emerge and could then become the central category of the research study.

### *Trustworthiness*

In analyzing the data, it was important to establish trustworthiness. In qualitative research approaches, trustworthiness establishes acceptable standards of scientific inquiry and ensures that the results of the study most accurately reflect the experiences of the study's participants. The process of trustworthiness utilizes qualitative terms such as "credibility, "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability" as the "naturalist's equivalent" of the quantitative terms "external and internal validity", "reliability" and "objectivity" (Creswell, 1998, p.197).

Credibility is established by way of triangulation of data and thick description, which ensures that findings can be transferred between the researcher and the research subjects. Reliability is determined according to the dependability of the results,

recognizing that the results may be “subject to change and instability” and “confirmability” occurs by auditing the research process (Creswell, 1998, p. 198).

In assessing the trustworthiness of a study, certain verification procedures must be employed. These verification procedures include prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher’s bias, member checks, rich, thick description, and external audits. It is recommended that qualitative researchers engage in at least two procedures in any given study (Creswell, 1998, p.203). For the purpose of my study, I utilized peer review, triangulation and clarifying researcher’s bias to assess the trustworthiness of my research.

*Peer review.* The material was reviewed by two social workers of Haitian descent. These two individuals were children of Haitian immigrants, familiar with the Haitian culture and the Haitian immigration experience. Their presence and input allowed me to more accurately present the data as it was intended by the participants. These two social workers had no connection to the participants involved in the study. And prior to reviewing the material, they completed the NIH human subjects review.

*Triangulation of data.* I employed triangulation to minimize systematic error and substantiate information obtained from various data collection methods (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). The semi-structured focus groups and individual interviews were triangulated with the demographic questionnaire, field notes and translator feedback. In order to ensure reliability, I asked questions in a manner that participants could understand and respond to. The demographic questionnaire was used to provide a context as to the participants’ pre- and post-migration and provide some idea of the participant’s social class orientation. For example, participants’ were asked about their mode of transportation they



accessed to immigrate to the United States, as well as their point of departure in Haiti. I used this information as an indicator of their possible immigration status. If a participant arrived by boat, the participant was classified as undocumented at the time of arrival, since most documented immigrants arrived by plane from Haiti or via ground transportation, from Canada. If participants' spoke French in their home after immigrating to the United States, participants were classified as possibly having a higher social class standing. . Although all Haitians speak Creole, French is the language spoken by the more educated and privileged Haitians.

My field notes were reviewed and analyzed after each focus group and interview to provide a more comprehensive look at the participants' responses in the context of help-seeking and social class. In addition, they helped me formulate additional questions that could elicit more substantive responses from participants. For example, a semi-structured question was 1) did you ever feel like you were treated differently in the United States because you were a Haitian immigrant? Although the semi-structured interview protocol included a series of other questions asking participants how, where and by whom they felt like they were treated differently, this one question seemed to exhaust all the different forms of treatment experienced by Haitian immigrants.

The field notes also provided me with insight as to how participants understood the question, and how to pose questions in a manner that did not insult participant's own social standing. For example, the terms used to differentiate Haitians were posed as "what comes to mind when you hear these terms, and I would then go on to name different cultural terms. Participants were very responsive to this question, and did not appear demeaned or insulted. In fact, participants often chuckled when answering this

question. Their non-verbal cues were noted throughout the field notes, even when they were ready to go. This along with the translator feedback allowed me to review the findings and simplify the research questions.

*Clarifying researcher's bias.* In analyzing the data, I had to take note of my own bias in approaching my research. I was the child of a Haitian immigrant from the first wave. My context was far different than that of the participants, with the exception of those from the first wave. First wave participants were familiar to me on all levels, the language proficiency, and their orientation as professional immigrants, the expectations they had for their children, and their comportment. I was comfortable facilitating this focus group, more so than all subsequent focus groups and individual interviews. I knew in part that I wanted to know more about first wave Haitian immigration experience, given the absence of their perspective in the empirical literature I had come across. I also knew that I had become more familiar with the experiences of Haitian immigrants from the latter waves, but had had very little interaction with this population. My limited interaction was partly the result of geographic distance and partly the result of our social class differences. It was important that I recognize this throughout the research process.

#### *Data Analysis Software*

The data analysis process for this study was conducted using two software packages, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for the demographic questionnaire and QSR NVivo9 program for the focus groups/individual interviews and field notes. SPSS 16 was used to analyze the demographic questionnaire and confirm the distinct composition of each of the four waves of Haitian immigrants. The descriptive statistics of *frequencies* and *crosstabs* identified the recurrence of certain variables and

provided a visual representation of the data. The use of these statistical methods further established the distinct context of departure and arrival and variations of social class among the four waves of Haitian immigration to the United States. Specifically, the immigrant's level of education, their preferred language of communication in the home pre and post-migration, religious practices, context of departure and residential background were used as indicators of social class standing. Based on these results, I was able to obtain a picture of the participants' social class orientation and its possible influence on the outcomes of the focus group/individual interview sessions.

The QSR Nvivo9 program was used to analyze the focus group and interview transcriptions. According to Creswell (1998), statistical programs facilitate the research process by providing the researcher with a quick reference to research material and an opportunity to organize a file system. The process of cutting and pasting is eliminated; instead the computer program allows the researcher to more quickly access the content through various text searches and forces a more careful examination of the material minimizing the researcher's casual read through (Creswell, 1998).

However, computer programs may pose some challenges, such as finding the right computer program for the researcher's agenda and qualitative approach. For the purpose of this study, I searched computer assisted programs, attended a webinar on NVivo9, and once the program was purchased, I spent a lot of time learning the program via online sources and animated tutorials. According to Creswell (1998), there are some additional challenges a researcher must avoid in using computer programs to assist in the analysis of data, such as relying solely on the program in the open coding process. And as

stated by the computer program itself, it facilitates, however, it does not do the thinking for the researcher.

Initially, I transcribed the data from all four focus groups and 12 individual interviews in word document. The transcription process produced 169 pages. These transcriptions or sources were then entered into the QSR NVivo 9 program under “internals folder”. The internals folder contains the primary research material or the sources. These sources were then labeled according to focus groups and interviews. There were four focus groups and 12 interview sessions. The focus group and interview sessions were labeled according to the participants’ year of arrival in the United States.

Once the sources were entered into the QSR NVivo9 program, I continued the open coding process. This process required a careful examination of the sources as a means of identifying emerging categories or themes. Responses to questions guided by the interview protocol were checked and re-checked within the sources, and initial nodes (categories) were formed. In the axial coding process, I continued to identify themes that related more closely to the nodes, called coding on, which then generated additional nodes( categories). In the QSR NVivo 9 program, the node contains titles of the source, themes identified as a *reference*, and the percent of the source coded within the node.

In the node itself, a source generated by word document is identified as a text. At the end of this process, I identified the 11 following nodes (categories); origin of distrust, treatment of Haitians post- 2010 earthquake, sense of preparation, perception of Haitian social structure, influence of social class in help-seeking, how Haitians perceive themselves, help-seeking behavior post and pre-migration, Haitian reception in the United States, Haitian connection, and context of departure.

In the selective coding process, I further fine-tuned the nodes (categories), and references were further exposed and linked to nodes (categories) to obtain a clearer image of the data and create a grounded theory. In the final analysis, there were 6 nodes (categories) and 20 themes. They will be discussed in further detail in the results section.

*Treatment of data.* Information obtained for the purpose of this study was kept anonymous and confidential. The participants were linked to their respective waves of immigration via their initial departure date from Haiti. Consent forms were kept locked in the researcher's home office and transcripts were kept in a document file on the researcher's main computer, which was password protected. This computer was locked in a secure area in the researcher's home office. Individual quotes from focus groups were titled by their wave of immigration, for example, "first wave participant" and quotes from individual interviews were titled by their year of arrival and gender such as "male participant -1986". In the transcription phase, any identified names were omitted or marked by X. Once the study is completed all documents and audio tapes will be destroyed.

In summary, grounded theory was the qualitative research design employed to analyze data. Data was collected using demographic questionnaire, focus groups, individual interviews, field notes and my observations. Once collected, a microscopic examination of the data was conducted by way of open, axial and selective coding methods. In addition trustworthiness was also described followed by the methods of verification employed for this study. Participant profiles by waves of immigration are presented in the next chapter. The results of the study are presented in chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5 presents the profile of Haitian immigrants per immigration period. Chapter 6 presents immigrant's concept of social class and perspective on help-seeking.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **A Profile of Haitian Immigrants by Immigration Period**

Chapter 5 presents the first set of research findings and begins with a detailed description of participants' demographic characteristics as observed in each respective wave of Haitian immigration. Each wave of Haitian immigration provides a context by which to gain a better understanding of the participant's orientation at the time of their initial arrival in the United States and their current reality. This description is then followed by a discussion of the five themes that emerged from the data, 1) decision to leave, 2) initial immigration experience in the United States, 3) ability to navigate resources in the United States, 4) perception of Haitian classes and 5) influence of Haitian upbringing on Haitian immigrants' ability to navigate resources in the United States. These themes were generated by the focus groups and individual interviews. Included in this section is a brief discussion of the treatment of Haitian immigrants post 2010 Haitian earthquake. The chapter concludes with the participants' responses according to each of the five themes.

#### **Participant Characteristics**

Participant characteristics revealed differences that were significant across each wave of Haitian immigration. Specifically, participants differed by social class, rural vs. urban background, level of education, and command of the French language. Participants generally did not differ by age at time of arrival. One interesting observation is that phenotypic differences were observed by wave of Haitian immigration.

### *First Wave of Haitian Immigration*

This thing is so insidious in my life...you were born... and you see those things every day and you take it for granted in a way. At that time it was a very small country... about 2 million people in the whole island. In Port- Au- Prince, 500,000 people. Delmas..Turgeau..Calais... where you live... some people go to Sacre... Coeur... to Lalue... school where the power group use to go...and the people who use to be the servants, the maid... and also in that class system, there is a club system, some people they are lighter had their own groups (first wave participant).

The first wave focus groups consisted of 12 participants. There were ten men and two women between the ages of 64-80. Most of the participants were raised in Haitian cities; they spoke Creole and French prior to leaving Haiti. They were all taught in French during their formative years in Haiti, and all spoke French; however, their preferred language of communication was Creole. Most arrived in the United States, Canada or France between the ages of 21-29. They had a strong grasp of the English language and had lived two thirds of their lives in the United States.

First wave participants' phenotype represented a wide range of racial and ethnic differences. Some were very light and appeared of European or Middle Eastern descent, and others were darker and appeared of African descent. For most of the participants, their initial country of destination was the United States and their city or region of destination was New York and surrounding states, specifically New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Although three of the participants initially migrated to Canada, France and Spain, they eventually made their way to the New York area. The majority remained in the Northeast region for most of their adult and career life. They are mostly Catholic and



all of the participants were professionals, Doctor, Engineer, Professor, Military Officer, Accountant and Commercial Artist. Most are retired, and now live in South Florida.

The first wave participants left Haiti under the presidency of Jean Francois ‘Papa’ Doc Duvalier. Their context of departure was marred by political instability, limited opportunities for advancement, and the need to seek better life opportunities for themselves and their families. They entered the United States as legal immigrants or political refugees where they were greeted by family members or close acquaintances. Some had been sponsored by relatives living in the United States; however some left Haiti under political duress, in exile, and therefore sponsorship was not possible.

#### *Second Wave of Haitian Immigration*

I am a person of the people... my parents did not have much money... however with education I was able to achieve a certain social status....however I am always linked to the people, despite the fact that I am not considered a person of the people (second wave participant)

The second wave focus group and individual interviews consisted of 11 participants. There were five men and six women between the ages of 54 -75. Half the participants arrived from Haitian cities and the other half from towns and rural townships. Their preferred language of communication in Haiti was Creole, however one participant listed Creole and Spanish, and one Creole and French. All indicated Creole as their preferred language in the United States. The second wave participants also had strong command of the English language. Their phenotype varied, although they ranged in complexion from light to dark skin, most of their features were of African descent They ranged in complexion from light to dark skin, however most were of African descent. The

participants identified their religious practices as Catholic, Christian, Pentecostal and Baptist. The majority were Christian. Their professions were diverse and included teachers, farmers, merchants, factory workers, administrators and social workers. They had also lived two thirds of their lives in the United States. All but two participants identified their initial country of destination as the United States; the other two identified the Bahamas. Of the 11 participants, 9 came directly to Miami, one to NYC and one to Waltham, MA. Their context of departure was the result of continued political instability and the need to seek better life opportunities in the United States. Of the 11 participants, three indicated that they left Haiti due to the political climate, and the remaining eight sought better life opportunities.

In the 1970's Haitian immigrants were still considered a welcomed immigrant population in the United States, however stricter immigration laws saw a rise in the number of Haitians arriving by boat, undocumented, and making Miami their initial city of arrival (Fouron, 1985; Stepick & Portes, 1986). All participants from the second wave arrived to the United States legally and by plane. Five participants were sponsored by close family members and six arrived without sponsorship. With the exception of one participant, all were greeted by family member, friends or acquaintances.

### *Third Wave of Haitian Immigration*

Let me give an example, when I receive word to start school... I went to see them... everybody is talking about Lavalas (political party- often affiliated with the "peup"- a movement that takes everything in its way- may be seen as inclusive or may be seen as something that destroys everything in its path- mostly made up

of those who are excluded) like they are with Lavalas. He's like, they look at me with my little glasses. At the time, I was not in that group (third wave participant)

The third wave focus group and individual interviews consisted of nine participants. There were five men and four women between the ages of 46-76. With the exception of three participants, all spoke Creole prior to leaving Haiti. One participant said they spoke Creole and French, and two said they spoke Creole and English. However in the United States, Creole was the preferred language of communication. Most of the third wave participants did not have a full grasp of the English language.

In terms of phenotype, they had much darker skin tones than participants from the previous two waves and were all of African descent. In terms of physical traits, they had much darker skin tones and were all of African descent. With the exception of two, all came directly from Haiti to Miami, one went to NYC and another arrived from Africa, but did not specify the country. Some came from Haitian cities and others from rural townships. At the time of their departure from Haiti, they were between the ages of 19-34. All named the Duvalier regime as their reason for departure from Haiti. Most identified themselves as Catholic and their professions were diverse, almost all the participants had blue collar jobs, caregiver, sales, housekeeping and a couple held professional positions, teacher and manager respectively.

In fact at the time of their departure, the Duvalier regime was coming to a close, Haiti was in destitute poverty and the socio-economic conditions were continuing to deteriorate. They were under push factors, in Haiti due to limited resources, limited opportunities for advancement, and absent of a supportive government entity. This period would see the largest wave of Haitian immigrants claiming the United States as their first

country of Asylum, meaning the first country where they sought refuge as political refugees. In this study most of the third wave participants arrived by plane, and one by boat. Most of the participants were sponsored by family members or friends.

#### *Fourth Wave of Haitian Immigration*

What I can say...there are different groups of Haitian people, a group that serves others... willing to help.. and a group that stays apart.. there is a possibility that they do not interact with those in need...much like in Haiti...the system in Haiti... there is a possibility of helping others...even when they know someone needs help... they don't help. In the community here, there is help...

(fourth wave participant)

The fourth wave focus group and individual interviews consisted of 11 participants. There were six men and five women between the ages of 26-65. Participants from the fourth wave spoke Creole and this is their preferred language of communication in the United States. Some participants spoke French, but very few had a grasp of the English language. In terms of phenotype, all participants had a dark complexion and were of African descent. Most of the participants had a dark complexion and were of African descent. All the participants arrived directly from Haiti to the United States, and specifically Miami. At the time of their arrival in the United States they were between the ages of 19-53. The participants arrived from cities and towns. Most identified themselves as Christian, and two participants stated that they were Catholic. One participant was a social worker and the remaining participants held blue collar jobs, caregivers, maintenance workers, and housekeepers. The participants arrived by plane and by boat.

Their context of departure was marked by the overthrow of President Aristide, the invasion of U.S. forces to re-stabilize the country, and the return of President Aristide. At the time, Haiti's socio-economic fabric was further deteriorating due to embargos and political instability and a history of ineffective policies which resulted in destitute poverty, environmental damages and absent government. Most of the participants left Haiti seeking better life opportunities, one sought asylum in the United States, and one was a political exile.

### Semi Structured Interview Protocol

#### *Discussion of the emerging themes*

The interview protocol explored the following areas, Haitian immigrants' help-seeking experiences in the United States, help-seeking experiences in a country other than the United States or Haiti, Haitian social class factors, help-seeking experiences in Haiti and finally Haitian immigrants' perspective on seeking supportive resources in the United States after the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of 52 questions, however after the first wave focus group; it became apparent to me that many of the questions formulated could be collapsed. During the focus group, and in the process of transcribing and analyzing the data collected, the protocol questions were centered around the following themes; 1) decision to leave Haiti, 2) initial immigration experience in the United States, 3) ability to navigate resources in the United States, 4) perception of Haitian classes and 5) influence of Haitian upbringing. Although the protocol included an inquiry into the treatment of Haitian immigrants post -2010 Haitian earthquake, its

findings were not as significant as the above mentioned concepts; however they are included in a brief summary.

*Decision to leave.* Most of the participants' decisions to leave Haiti were based on Haiti's political and economic climate. All participants were seeking better life opportunities, however not all participants were expecting to remain permanently in the United States. This was particularly evident among first wave Haitian immigrants, who left Haiti at the height of the Duvalier regime.

First and second wave immigrants had professional skills or were skilled laborers. Some left Haiti under duress, while others left due to limited opportunities for advancement in education or professionally, and so leaving was a logical option in the absence of political and economic stability. In addition first and second wave Haitian immigrants were also experiencing pull factors from foreign countries seeking professionals in the medical and teaching fields.

Third and fourth wave Haitian immigrants were less skilled or educated, and their context of departure was also marred by political instability, embargos and a country in destitute poverty. Among third and fourth wave participants, immigration was also recognized as a viable and necessary option. Table 3 provides selected quotes related to decision to leave.

Table 3: Decision to Leave

Haitian Immigration Wave	Selected Participant Quote
First Wave	<p>“Some of us don’t have any problems when we came here. X did not have problems, XX did not have any problems. (XX) no I had problems..... Well when I came to the United States I’d been trained in Haiti and passed my examinations, equivalency medicale in Haiti, and I was at that time, I was considered a medical graduate. I applied to 5 hospital and was accepted for to all 5 hospitals I applied for.”</p> <p>“If I did not have that friend, I would have had to go to Chile. I was at the embassy of Chile, as a refugee hiding from the famous squad of Duvalier...”</p>
Second Wave	<p>“I was young...it was Duvalier fault... they shoot, everywhere, I was running like everybody, and I see they come and get other children and those children was in the Church, American or different nationality... and they push me out... I cry...I fall down...”</p>
Third Wave	<p>When you living in Haiti, you really want to come to the United States.</p>
Fourth Wave	<p>“Haiti does not have resources, so I was ill prepared for that”</p>

*Initial immigration experience in the United States.* The participants’ adaption to the United States varied by wave of immigration. However participants from all four waves of immigration arrived in the United States greeted by someone of Haitian descent, a Haitian connection. The Haitian connection was an individual identified as directly linked to the participant, mother, father, wife or husband, or indirectly linked to the participant by way of extended family member or close family friend. These individuals provided a point of reference, which then allowed participants to begin their own

navigation in the United States. Table 4 provides selected quotes based related to initial immigration experience in the United States.

Table 4: Initial Immigration Experience in the United States

<b>Haitian Immigration Wave</b>	<b>Selected Participant Quotes</b>
First Wave	“So I came from Haiti and we had a good friend at the American Embassy who gave us our visas. We’re among the lucky Haitians we came with our residency visa.”
Second Wave	“In Haiti I had friends who would talk, when I got here I called the people and they helped me and then they find me work.”
Third Wave	“Yeah, her sister went to wait for her. She know when the boat will arrive and everything.”
Fourth Wave	“I had friends here.”

*Ability to navigate resources* .Participants discussed their decisions to seek supportive resources in the United States, and their sense of orientation in the context of help-seeking. Most participants had never traveled to the United States prior to their immigration with the exception of a few from the second wave. Those who had previously traveled to the United States had some familiarity with U.S. resources; however most participants relied on the knowledge of family members or friends to assist in obtaining resources during their resettlement period. In discussing their ability to obtain resources, participants talked about the discriminatory treatment they experienced from White and African Americans, other Haitian immigrants and U.S. resource providers. Most participants discussed what they perceived and experienced as the preferential treatment given to Latinos, namely Cubans in the South Florida area, by U.S service providers. Table 5 provides examples of selected quotes related to ability to navigate resources.



Table 5: Ability to Navigate Resources

Haitian Immigration Wave	Selected Participant Quotes
First Wave	“Therefore there was no notion of social workers helping Haitians in this context, so. And it’s a sure differences between this experience and the Cuban community where they were given a lot of support that ... the social tissue that they had in Cuba, we were left all by ourselves, so therefore governmental help was not something that we knew about”
Second Wave	“When I come here my Mom was here. And then, umm, a friend of mine from Haiti help me find a job where she worked”
Third Wave	“When she got married her husband give her all the documents she need.” “Oh, she used to travel for uh, she used to uh, visit. So, she used to come here to buy merchandise and then went back to Haiti.”
Fourth Wave	“When the Haitian people go apply for some services or housing, uh Medicaid, Medicare and so on... they are very difficult to get the services, but when the Cuban people come they get it easy because there are people to help them and there are um people to navigate them with finding services, but for them it is very difficult.”

*Perception of Haitian classes.* Given that the intent of the research was to examine whether social class as a cultural construct had an influence on Haitian immigrants’ help-seeking behaviors, it was important to obtain participants’ thoughts, beliefs, understanding of Haitian social structure. It was important to assess whether Haiti’s social structure had an impact on participants’ ability to navigate resources in the United States. All participants were asked to provide their initial thoughts when asked about the following terms, *Bourgeoisie (elite)*, *Habitant (country people)*, *Peup (the people)*, *Moun Mon (mountain people)* and *Restavek* (poor children sent to live in host

homes, they receive housing, food and sometimes education in exchange for domestic services).

These are terms used to stratify Haitians, and at times used as injurious terms, to demean one another. All participants were very aware of these terms, and their descriptors were very consistent across all waves of immigration. This is not to say that all participants condoned the use of these terms, in fact many talked about how ignorant it was to continue using these terminologies. Table 6 provides examples of selected quotes relevant to perception of Haitian classes.

Table 6: Perception of Haitian Classes

Haitian Immigration Wave	Selected Participant Quotes
First Wave	“One thing you are talking to a few privilege, we have education, a few of us came with a profession”
Second Wave	“I am a person of the people... my parents did not have much money... however with education I was able to achieve a certain social status...”
Third Wave	“But once they see you, you kind-of like, you know, you went to school, you know, you bettered yourself so, people who doesn’t know you cannot know exactly, you know, cannot label you of any kind”
Fourth Wave	“uh, what I can say...there are different groups of Haitian people, a group that serves others... willing to help.. and a group that stays apart.. there is a possibility that they do not interact with those in need...much like in Haiti...”

*Influence of Haitian upbringing.* This theme captured the participants’ life experiences prior to leaving Haiti, specifically their intimate experiences among family members. It was important to bring this into the research context, as this could explain their orientation as to help-seeking which will be discussed later. All of the participants were raised by a close family member, a parent, aunt or grand-parent. Their experiences

in Haiti proved to be critical in understanding how Haitian immigrants navigate or think of navigating resources in the United States. It also became clear that government assistance was limited to nonexistent, in fact most participants found this particular question about government somewhat amusing. Table 7 provides examples of selected quotes relevant to influence of Haitian upbringing on Haitian immigrants' ability to navigate resources in the United States.

Table7: Influence of Haitian Upbringing

Haitian Immigration Wave	Selected Participant Quotes
First Wave	"No In Haiti, the parents do everything for the children, the children are not prepared. You go for education that's it. That's all you know. That was your job."
Second Wave	"my parents, my father, they tell me what is going on, What they showed me how to be responsible and no matter what you deal with, be alone, cope with it."
Third Wave	"When I was in Haiti, I wasn't married, and I lived with my mother, my mother had a house, and I had a job."
Fourth Wave	"The Haitians don't want to help other Haitians in Haiti. But when I come here they always look for work for me. If I was in Haiti, they would not do that."

*Treatment of Haitian immigrants post 2010 Haitian earthquake.* Overall it seemed as though participants were appreciative of the efforts made by foreign governments on the behalf of Haitians in Haiti. One participant was particularly impressed by the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) given to undocumented Haitian immigrants living in the United States, at the time of the earthquake. Others also expressed gratitude to the Obama administration. In addition many participants were

impressed with some of the news coverage, in particular the discussions on Haitian history, which seemed to provide more insight into Haiti's political, economic and social fabric, and Haitians themselves. However, it did not seem that this crisis had any long-lasting effect on the lives of participants or their treatment by service providers. Table 8 provides examples of selected quotes relevant to treatment of Haitian immigrants post 2010 Haitian earthquake.

Table 8: Treatment of Haitian Immigrants Post 2010 Haitian Earthquake.

Haitian Immigration Wave	Selected Participant Quotes
First Wave	"It was good help."
Second Wave	<p>"I, I, I, no, I think after the Earthquake people have more compassion for the Haitian people."</p> <p>"It was greatly appreciated by the Haitian community to obtain TPS (Temporary Protective Status). Some of my co-patriots were victims of their naivety by persons in the community, by other Haitians. In general it was well received by the Haitian community. Many Haitians became legalized in the United States. They could not work legally and help their families in Haiti."</p>
Third Wave	"Uhhh, uhh, uhh, uhh, I feel that in terms of solidarity."
Fourth Wave	"no...nothing changed"

#### Participants' Responses to the Semi-Structure Interview Protocol

The following section presents the five themes, 1) decision to leave, 2) initial immigration experience in the United States, 3) ability to navigate resources in the United States, 4) perception of Haitian classes and 5) influence of Haitian upbringing on

Haitian immigrants' ability to navigate resources in the United States and the responses by each wave of Haitian immigrants, 1957, 1970, 1980 and 1991.

### *Decision to Leave Haiti*

*First wave Haitian immigrants (1957-1969).* The first wave of Haitian immigration to the United States was the result of a changing political climate. At the time of their departure, Haiti's population was approximately 2 million people. The country had not yet to experience the devastating effects of Duvalier's policies, however any opposition to the government became a threatened and a threatening source to the Duvalier regime. In fact, many of the participants in this first wave did not choose to leave Haiti "from an Army Officer, I was running for me life" , "I did not chose to leave, my name was on the death squad list of Mr. Duvalier." One participant talked about seeking refuge at the Chilean Embassy in Port-Au-Prince, "I was at the embassy of Chile, as a refugee, hiding from the famous squad of Duvalier". For many of the participants, the changing political climate, and their response to this change or affiliation with individuals opposed to the government, forced them to leave Haiti under conditions of duress "so when I left Haiti it was because of political situation, some of my friends were in jail, so I was scared for my life". Participants often left wives, husbands and children and family members behind "the children were in Haiti and they were killing children," "they arrested her four brothers and put them in "Ft. Dimanche" a Haitian prison that held many political dissidents), one of the them was killed."

In addition to the political context, Haiti was a country with limited resources, so although Haitian institutions prepared Haitians for professional careers, these institutions offered limited spaces for admission to advanced degree programs and limited job

opportunities in Haiti. As a result, participants talked about the importance of having connections in the various governmental and educational institutions. They called these connections “*Parrain*”, or god-father, and they were individuals who could speak on your behalf for school admissions or job opportunities. According to one participant having a *Parrain* became more critical following the 1961 student strike, which resulted in the government taking control of the University “from 61 to 86, you had to have someone to help you get into Medical school.” In this context, participants also talked about preparing to seek job opportunities outside of Haiti “I was expecting to come here (United States)”. However it became apparent that this preparation was not in the context of full emigration, it was for opportunity “preparation was not to immigrate, if you have the opportunity to come to the United States you come... you go to school, you learn something and then you work if you have a job, in Haiti. In the 60’s, no job”. One participant stated “we were the potential professional of the future” “in my city most professionals had already left when I left in 1964,” “it is this motivation of being somewhere, that we were being prepared for, that we come to bare the fruits of the United States or Canada.”

Here again the opportunity to go elsewhere was not considered an emigration, the sense of permanency did not factor in, “Haitians who left Haiti did not intend to stay,” in this response, participants were all in agreement “When I come to the United States, I came to study and go back.” “No one came to stay.” One participant talked about hoping or expecting Duvalier’s presidency to be short-lived, however it was not and eventually his presidency was seceded to his son, Jean Claude Duvalier “I was waiting for Duvalier to die, instead of dying or leaving... he left us Jean Claude.” . Some had

come to seek refuge, and even this was perceived as a temporary stay “we had to come here for political reasons, for our lives, to save our lives.” According to the participants many Haitian immigrants who left during the first wave of Haitian immigration were called “*Camoquin*”. Under the Duvalier regime, *Camoquin* were political dissidents, who left Haiti under duress “the fact that you had to leave Haiti under duress made you a *Camoquin*.”. According to one participant, who is a medical doctor, *Camoquin* was a medication given to patients suffering from Malaria. The effects of the medicine caused diarrhea. The participant stated that people were called *Camoquin*, because like diarrhea they caused problems for the government.

At the same time, several foreign countries were seeking professionals from various countries, including Haiti to address a gap in labor. The United States was in the midst of the Korean conflict “remember there was a different war... they were looking for us.” “Haitians was giving help to other countries.” “Congo, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and the United States take advantage of doctors that were coming from Haiti, this is our great drain.”. Participants talked about the pull factor from countries like Canada and Congo, who were seeking Haitian professionals “ My own teacher in dental school left the country ( Haiti) for political reasons where do you think he go...to Congo.”

*Second wave Haitian immigrants (1970-1979).* The second wave of Haitian immigration to the United States arrived as two distinct cohorts, separated by changes in U.S. immigration laws. Many were educated professionals or skilled laborers, seeking political refuge and better life opportunities. The first cohort arrived at a time when the United States was at War with Vietnam and faced with a shortage of skilled laborers, the United States welcomed skilled laborers from many countries including Haiti. And like

their predecessors, Haitians in this first cohort immigrated to the Northeast region of the United States. However as the Vietnam war came to an end, the U.S immigration laws became more stringent and it became more difficult for Haitian immigrants to enter the United States. As a result, many in the second cohort immigrated directly into South Florida. It was during the latter part of this decade that Haitians started to arrive by boat.

In Haiti, Haitians were feeling the full effect of the Duvalier regime, and the subsequent change in power from Papa Doc Duvalier to his son Jean Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier. Haiti’s infrastructure continued to deteriorate, and Haitians continued to seek freedom from political oppression and better life opportunities. As one participant stated “ I was the head of the student body, brutalized by the Ton Ton Macoute... I could no longer stay in Haiti” another participant talked about his forced departure from Haiti due to his teaching practices which appeared to speak up against the Duvalier government “ a Professor of history, who was committed to teaching effectively and critique certain systems, well a Professor of this kind would have many problems with Duvalier. I was arrested and spent a year in prison because of my critiques.” They also expressed a need for better life opportunities “I wanted a better life.” Some had even traveled to the United States on vacations and business trips prior to emigrating “I have been to United States several times before for my business.” “I use to come and spend my vacations in the United States.” And some participants reunited with their family members “My family came over, so I came over.” “Yes, yes, my older brother greeted me and my mother brought me here.”

The second wave ‘s context of departure was varied, some left due to the political climate, some to reunite with family members in the United States, and some seeking



better life opportunities. Unlike their predecessors, some had traveled to the United States prior to emigrating and so had some familiarity with the U.S. culture.

*Third wave Haitian immigrants (1980-1989).* The third wave Haitian immigrants represent the largest wave of Haitian immigration to the United States. They became known as the “boat people” following their arrival during the Port of Mariel Boatlift. Their context of departure was marked by the overthrow of Jean Claude Duvalier’s dictatorship in 1986. At the time, Haiti was and still is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Haitians faced with desperate poverty and an uncertain future began making their way to the United States. Many arrived by boats directly into South Florida. Unlike their Cuban counterparts who were received as political refugee status, Haitians were considered economic migrants, and as such they were prevented from accessing U.S. refugee resettlement services. Their arrival was unexpected and unwelcomed. They were mostly poor, black, under – educated, spoke Creole and were stigmatized by the AIDS epidemic and Voodoo.

Participants talked about leaving Haiti for political and economic reasons. Some obtained visas for work and some to immigrate to the United States.” in 1986 ....I was a issued the visa. I decide I was going to travel in one month, and when thing starts getting, you know, kind of crazy because of a lot of riots and then when Jean Claude (President) to leave Haiti” “I had a visa. I came here for work. I spent a year and a half here. I was first in NY. I worked to make money. I worked in a factory after I worked elsewhere.”

For most participants, their departure from Haiti seemed planned “Well, it was something planned, because my mother had left Haiti to come the United States. So, I knew, me and my sibling knew that one day we will be leaving Haiti.” Participants

discussed being reunited with their family members as well as the difficulties of living in Haiti

No, no, no we were poor, because, the reason I say that is because if my mother was not in the United States to send money to pay the rent, to pay the school, we would have a big problem, we didn't have no other resources (third wave participant)

The political climate was tenuous and participants were aware of its uncertainty. There was also an awareness that one had to be careful "It was more about politics than anything else. And I knew how to get and not get in trouble." Immigration was a logical and viable option.

*Fourth wave Haitian immigrants (1991-1995).* At the time of their departure, Haiti was a state of instability, President Aristide, the first democratically elected President of Haiti was ousted in 1991, then in 1994 reinstated with the support of U.S. military forces. However the political situation was tenuous, and Haiti remained the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Life for most Haitians was and is one of desperate poverty. In their decision to leave Haiti, participants talked about seeking better life opportunities, given Haiti's socio-economic conditions. Participants also discussed the absence of resources and job opportunities "Haiti does not have resources" I have nothing to do... the country is getting worse" "Here in the US, if you have a trade or profession, you are able to find a job" "Most came for a better life and reunification with family members established in the United States "for a better way of life." "I left for a better way of life."

### *Initial Immigration Experience in the United States*

*First wave Haitian immigrants (1957-1969).* The participants' initial process of adaptation was at times challenging, as they adjusted to their new environment "as an immigrant I did not know my place, I did not know where I belong." . Some participants had not planned to be in New York, The climate was different depending on their time of arrival, the language posed a barrier, they had limited resources and new very few people.

I remember one thing that hit me really bad... my mother would say don't open the door for anybody... that's the way of life over here... at home in Haiti doors are always open... here we have to keep everything closed (first wave participant)

Language was identified as a barrier. Participants talked about having to navigate on their own, arriving in a country where those around them did not speak French or Creole. "Remember we had the problem of language in this country...a guy from Jamaica could probably speak any place, he will find his way home if he asked somebody." "We had to act alone, our relationship with people, because we could not express ourselves," "We worked in the back." . Many worked in factories, where language barriers could be circumvented until they could move on. However there was a determination to seek a better life regardless of the circumstance "I would do anything then, I don't care if I had to shine shoes." "the experience was to find a job... you had to look." "I just arrived in NYC ... I saw an ad in the New York Times asking for a shoe salesman who could speak French or Spanish." One participant talked about the benefits of knowing French in jobs requiring teaching or translation "language could also be an advantage, when Haitians come here they could also be teachers of French." "I had friends in Washington DC and

so I went to Washington DC, and the third week I was working as a translator. I found a job at the university teaching.”

One participant talked about having a smooth transition to the United States after completing his medical studies in Haiti

Some of us don’t have problems when we came here... I applied to five hospitals and was accepted at all five hospitals I applied for....I don’t have any problems as an intern...I am not the only one lots of Haitian doctors came through this system  
(first wave participant)

*Second wave Haitian immigrants (1970-1979).* Many of the participants traveled to the United States or the Bahamas prior to emigrating from Haiti and therefore some of their initial experiences in the United States seemed less overwhelming than that of participants from the first wave. Participants talked about their familiarity with the United States, as vacationers or merchants, “I spent almost every year here vacationing and I had lots of friends here. I did not feel as though I was in a foreign country.” This same participant had been threatened under the Duvalier regime, and so once here, felt a sense of peace “I was happy to be here, because my life was threatened in Haiti. I felt safe.” Another participant had been to the Bahamas and from the Bahamas came to visit the United States. “At first I traveled to Bahamas for my business and United States.” Some of the participants also talked about reuniting with their parent “I stay with my mother.” “My father sent for me.” Unlike some of the first wave participants, there did not appear to be this overwhelming sense of urgency in leaving Haiti, only a few participants felt threatened under the Duvalier regime.

Some participants talked about being labeled as “French”, and this seemed to be beneficial to in their adaptation. Americans seemed more receptive to Haitian immigrants “they called us French people, they did not call us Haitian, we are French.” This label or perception of Haitians as French seemed to minimize some of the effects of prejudice and discrimination against them.

At first nobody was receptive because they did not know...they use to call me French that’s it... they did not know about the Haitian in Miami. There were a lot of Haitians in NY. In Miami the Haitian community was very very small. Some black American and some Caribbean, but I felt the white people were more receptive (second wave participant)

“I didn’t because we are Haitian, they use to call us French, they happy to see us.”

“Same thing because you are so happy for us as French people.” However, their arrival did have its own set of challenges. A couple of participants talked about a change in perception and subsequently treatment of Haitian immigrants following the arrival of Haitian boat people “Were you treated differently after that.... Of course, we were boat people.” “When we first got here they no treat us no wrong, in late 70” “It did, after they, after the refugees started coming?” Participants recognized that the U.S. perception of Haitians after the third wave of Haitian immigration to the United States created a climate of uncertainty for all Haitian immigrants. Participants talked at length about the discriminatory treatment of Haitians in the 1980’s “The image of Haiti, in the journals, TV.... were not flattering...the articles written about Haiti were not flattering”.

Nevertheless, many participants had a clear sense that they or Haitian immigrants had experienced discrimination before and after the arrival of the “Haitian boat people”,

and some even took action against this in the form of protest and demonstrations. One participant recounted his first experience with discrimination in the United States

Ahh, what happened in the first four weeks we went to, we lived in a primarily white neighborhood where uhh we went to a bank to open an account, me and my brother and older brother, two brothers, and cousin who had simply come for the ride. And they thought that we, they did not know we were opening an account and when we were leaving they thought that we were robbing the bank (second wave participant)

Participants also discussed their advocacy efforts on behalf of Haitian immigrants, a sense of responsibility to assist those most vulnerable “In some places you could feel the difference... they would charge Haitians more.”

Often we protested against discriminatory treatment ... and the treatment was bad...unfortunately... we were always in the street protesting for the treatment of Haitians people...the treatment they are receiving...so many things the write negative about Haitians...I almost got killed there... at that time, they beat a lot of Haitian people.. they beat them....( second wave participant)

There appeared to be real commitment to protecting Haitian immigrants' rights.

I can say to you that the biggest historic manifestation we had in the Haitian community... really a boycott... in 1978 against a supermarket X... I was one of the main organizers against this boycott... because the manager... told the X journal that Haitians smelled bad... so something had to be placed in the supermarket to get rid of their odor. It went very well... a public apology was given and the manager was fired. We had a great victory against discriminatory

and racist behaviors. We also went into schools to address the discrimination against Haitian students by some of the teachers (second wave participant)

In addition there was the perception of Haitians, carriers of AIDS, poor, Black and uneducated, particularly in South Florida. According to one participant Haitian immigrants were considered at the root of all problems

That's for me, all Haitian people have a problem here. Especially in Miami, they don't like Haitian people. Anything bad is for Haitian people. They don't like Haitian people at all. I can say that because I see too many things. (second wave participant)

and that Cubans, or Spanish speaking immigrants were treated far better, especially from the established Spanish speaking community "And when the Cuban people come, they let them stay, they give them house and the next day they went to the office to apply for Social Security for them and they give them jobs the same week." "When the Cuban people come, Spanish, there's help for them... And you Haitian, I can find no help..." "Spanish they worry about Cubans they don't care about Haitians. On the American side, they are very compassionate".

*Third wave Haitian immigrants (1980-1989).* Some participants were familiar with the United States, they had traveled on business trips as merchants, and so their initial immigration experience seem to go smoothly "No it was not bad. I had a visa. With a visa you get a job, buy merchandise and return to my country." "I was a "marchande" (someone who sells goods at local markets). I bought products from Europe to sell in Haiti. Sometimes I would stay here (United States) make money, purchase items and then return to Haiti to sell them" One participant stated that it was possible that his treatment

was linked to his appearance, he was of mixed descent and seemed to feel that this factor may have helped in his adaption “it may be that possibility, because I know that sometimes when your skin is lighter, you might be treated differently by certain people. “

However it was clear that some participants were aware of and experienced discrimination as they talked about their initial arrival, whether by boat or plane

like 1980 for most of the Haitians it was not easy, the treatment was not as you think...the treatment we have received and the treatment the other people, like Cuban, who come from another country unlike the Haitian people very different... we had a big riot by the airport... because they say they have the SIDA (AIDS)... say to take them back (third wave participant)

“the treatment was not good because we are Haitian, they say to deport us.”

There was even mention of the Krome Detention Center where many Haitian immigrants were detained upon their arrival in the United States “and the treatment was bad...”

Many participants talked about being reunited with family members or friends, I had friends.” “I lived with family.” As well some participants mentioned being treated differently by different ethnic groups; for some White Americans treated them better “White Americans don’t treat me differently.” And for others it seemed that everyone felt they were superior to Haitians “Spanish and White think they are superior to Blacks. African Americans think they are better than Haitian and Jamaicans.”

There were also issues within the Haitian community, given the negative backlash of their immigration to the United States, many Haitians did not acknowledge their Haitian heritage, there was a feeling of shame, as one participant noted “Due to an



identity crisis, Many Haitians had problems identifying themselves as Haitians at the time.”

*Fourth wave Haitian immigrants (1991-1995).* For most participants their initial immigration experience seemed to go smoothly. Some arrived by plane on visas “my father and my mother, they apply for residence” and some by boat. In fact there was a network of people in the Miami area aware of the boat arrival locations “they know that very well, they smart”. “They call. Her sister went to wait for her. She know when the boat will arrive and everything.” One participant arrived by plane and was immediately placed in detention and released after one month “ I went to Broward Detention Center” Some participants applied for asylum once in the United States” She applied for asylum” while others sought legal status via marriage “When she got married her husband give her all the documents she need.

At the time of their arrival, Miami had an established Haitian community, and most participants were linked to the community by way of family members and friends. As such their experiences were less overwhelming than the participants from the previous immigration waves. There seemed to be a sense of accessibility, participants were able to obtain jobs, and other needed resources “here if you have a skill you work, you work” something that eluded many of them in Haiti “Here in the US, if you have a trade or profession, you are able to find a job.

#### *Ability to Navigate Resources in the United States*

*First wave Haitian immigrants (1957-1969).* All participants had someone of Haitian descent who facilitated their transition and assisted them in navigating resources in the United States. One participant talked about having to rely on someone, which also

meant this individual's time and willingness to help "to find a job somebody got to take you... find someone willing to take the day off." Although all participants received some form of assistance from family members or acquaintances who were already established in the United States, this form of assistance was temporary "for the first two weeks I had my brother, after that I was on my own," "her aunt found out we were coming... she paid rent for us for a couple of weeks in an inexpensive hotel in Manhattan." Even those who arrived unexpectedly were provided some form of assistance by family members or acquaintances "the thing is there were people before us who could help us."

However despite the presence of these Haitian connections, participants talked about feeling alone, and having to seek resources "centered around self-help." So although participants knew someone, and were assisted by these individuals at the initial point of arrival to the United States, it became clear that these Haitian connections did not share the same professional background, and therefore, the participants continued to have this sense of isolation, of having to navigate on their own "... my wife did not know about dentistry, nor my father in law or mother in law. I did not have anybody to help me. It was pure coincidence that I met X and he mentioned about forming a dental association"

In addition at the time of their immigration, there was a pervasive sense of distrust "for people who came from Haiti there was distrust, the political system in Haiti distrusted the people. You could not trust anyone because you did not know their political affiliation." As a result the Haitian connections were scrutinized. The Haitian connection was conflicted; at one end participants needed someone close to facilitate their navigation; however their relations could pose serious safety risks for them in the United States and their families back in Haiti. Participants talked about having to be careful with

their associations, or their political position. “There was always a family, or somebody very close to you who put you in a bad political situation.”

Participants talked attending political meetings in NY, and having to be careful, aware that spies were sent by the Haitian regime. They talked about having to cover their faces, for fear that their presence could jeopardize the lives of family members and friends left behind. This sense of trust was difficult to establish, and as a result people could not trust each other, unless there was some shared experience, that could link their perspectives,” Here again, participants were expecting to return to Haiti, and so they had to be careful.”

*Second wave Haitian immigrants (1970-1979).* As with the first wave of immigrants, Haitian immigrants from the second wave experienced many challenges, however unlike the Northeast, the South Florida climate was more familiar; in addition, there was a small established Haitian community “there was a community here that, they were helping each other out with jobs” “I can’t say a large community, but there were a lot of Haitians.” Some members of the Haitian community had formed social service agencies to assist Haitians, particularly in the realm of education and job readiness

From 1977, we created an institution, like “La Acade”...a social agency, the largest one to serve the Haitian community. Unfortunately, it does not exist for some time... after 20 years serving the Haitian community. This social serve agency organized summer programs for Haitian students. I helped. I was responsible to teach reading and writing courses. This was important in the Haitian community, because many of my co-patriots were not able to read or

write and this was important in the Haitian community. I felt that this was a job that needed to be done (second wave participant)

As with the first wave immigrants, participants also had a “Haitian connection”, someone of Haitian descent to assist them in navigating resources. They were either direct and indirect family members or a close family friend “In Haiti I had friends who would talk, when I got here I called the people and they helped me and then they find me work.” “we had family, friends” “When I come here my Mom was here. And then, umm, a friend of mine from Haiti, help me find a job where she worked.” These connections helped in all facets of their lives, from housing, education, and work to immigration issues “my brother, older brother found me work.” Although participants talked about having a Haitian connection to begin the navigation process, they expressed a sense of having to be on their own in terms of securing work, securing housing and securing an education. They may have found someone to initiate that process, however once the process was initiated they were on their own.

life was not easy... it was very hard...I couldn't believe it... A friend of my parents from Haiti, the guy that took me here, he took me to get my social security card, I get my social security card and after that, I was pretty much on my own. I had no one to turn to really...At that time it was very difficult for me, very difficult, but you know I navigate myself. I went to school. Nobody told me exactly how to go to school (second wave participant)

Another participant talked about being on her own “First of all. I was alone here. I don't have no one. Understand. No family in NY. No brothers, no auntie nobody.” Many participants also talked about addressing their needs within the family unit, or their

church and this seemed to be a recurring theme “Different members in the house you turned to.” “Church and family.”

Haitians from the second wave were also faced with a sense of distrust, they talked about challenges faced in obtaining assistance from other Haitians in a culture of not wanting others to do better “one thing about Haitians also, the Haitians they don’t understand. They don’t like you if you have a good education, they don’t like you.”

No, they don’t want them to do better. And they like everybody, usually like we have five fingers, well, they’re not the same. It’s like God put it like that we have to become low to up, but the Haitians don’t like that, they want everybody to be in the same position” “I would say ... cultural...the cultural ... like the emblem of the black... fort... but it’s not like that... people don’t see you,,,like ummm, like when you’re moving in society, people don’t like that (second wave participant)

The origins of distrust seem pervasive, and possibly the result of an oppressive political regime and competition for limited resources “You can’t trust the neighbor, then the neighbor can’t trust you, you can’t trust your own cousin, that mean everybody fend for themselves.”

*Third wave Haitian immigrants (1980-1989).* Participants talked about having a person in the United States to help in obtaining resources “my friend took me to get my first job.” “I arrived in May and so what I did as well, there was a summer program for Haitian youth, and a friend of mine, a professor as well who worked in this program, came to get me to help out.”. These individuals were of Haitian descent, again a family member or friend established in the United States who could help them to obtain

resources “ I lived with my brother” “my kids lived here.” “we use to live with an Aunt.” “a friend of mine he told me about it, if you need a job”.

Here again this Haitian connection was present, even if temporary it did provide a point of reference for most of the participants. In the context of seeking resources, participants talked about seeking support within the family or through prayer. This sense of self-reliance was very ingrained in the culture “I turn to my wife and family.” “my problems I resolve them myself.” “I believe I have to take action. I have a very best friend, a person we can talk about anything. You know? “And family, I don’t to tell anybody what’s wrong... I want to talk to the person”. “I can pray.”

*Fourth wave Haitian immigrants (1991-1995).* Participants from the fourth wave had family members or friends of Haitian descent established in the United States, a Haitian connection. This Haitian connection linked participants to resources, particularly housing, school and job opportunities “when I arrived here I had family that helped me” “the person that I stayed with provided me with most of what I needed because I didn’t know anything. I didn’t know how to tap into anything.” “I lived with my brother and sister, they helped me with school.” For some participants this was a privilege to have someone assisting in your ability to seek resources, however many arrived with little knowledge of resources or the availability of resources and so seeking resources was not a consideration ““When I first came to the United States, uhm, I didn’t get any resources because I didn’t know how, I didn’t know anything.” “In Haiti I never really went for help because this was non-existent.”

Participants also talked about how they were treated differently than their Spanish counterparts when attempting to obtain resources “No Haitians to take care of us... but

when Spanish people go, there is someone for them. They are Spanish not black like me, so when they come, they go first... all Spanish go ahead then everyone else” “they are very difficult to get the services, but when the Cuban people come they get it easy because there are people to help them.” In addition, participants talked about how they were treated differently by other Haitians

The person knows how to speak Creole, but then would not help them, would not even say that they know how to speak Creole. Then she says, well that’s how it used to happen, you know, before, a while back, but now it’s different, because, for example: the other day I went to a place and then I’m like, can you have a representative that speaks Creole serve me and then the person was like yeah, I speak Creole ( fourth wave participant)

#### *Perception of Haitian Classes*

*First Wave Haitian immigrants (1957-1969).* Participants’ perception of Haitian social class became a point of discussion once the issue of race was introduced. Most participants were aware, at the time of their arrival that racial differences exist in the United States. As one participant stated “you are Haitian, you are Black, you have a lot of strike. You can be persecuted. There’s an expression in the United States at that time, be prompt, be nice be 12, all doctors know this.” Participants recalled some experiences that reaffirmed the American perception of Haitians. Some talked about their surprise at the forms of discriminatory and racist treatment experienced by African Americans “I’m hearing about people being hung, or people who had to be in the back of the bus. You never see that in Haiti.” “If you are very white you can fit in, but some people you cannot fit in” another participant talked about being overlooked professionally due to

race... “And also we had the problem of race, they pass you because you are not White... we get passed for promotion... we get bigger, we get bypassed.” It seemed that although this could happen in Haiti, it would not be due to race, but connection and affluence.

Participants were aware of the prejudice that existed in Haiti

Haiti is a very prejudice country, I know prejudice, prejudice of color, class, I know even prejudice of language, somebody speaks French, somebody speak Creole, somebody mulatto, somebody very White, somebody very Black,...but we are a country, we can live together, we feel very good ( first wave participant).

“there is a lot of prejudice in Haiti like United States of America, but you learn to live with it, without paying attention to it.” “There’s an expression in Haiti, God gave you five fingers and each finger has a wall. And people in Haiti live with this expression “ *bon Dieu bon*, God is good,” whatever happens is the wish of God, God wants it to happen”. So that balances a lot of things.” It seemed as though this perception, that prejudice exists in many various forms, not only based on racial differences, better prepared Haitian immigrants to respond to prejudice in the United States.

The participants all agreed that they were aware of social class differences “The rich had their club, the middle class who are the intellectual... had their own club and the poor people use to stand in the street.” “There’s an expression in Haiti, if you are dark skin and you are rich, you are White, if you are White and poor, you are Black.” It seems as though race played a secondary or concurrent role to wealth.

Although one participant acknowledged that his skin tone and family affluence allowed him certain privileges, others seemed to agree that class, specifically in the context of wealth was more an indicator of social class divisions, than race “it would be



much better talking about class... I have lots of friends who are more affluent than myself and they are black...so they could go anywhere they want... I had many.”

Participants talked about race, skin tone as playing secondary roles to class. So in introducing terms that delineate class differences, like *bourgeoisie*, *habitant*, *peup* and *mounmon*, participants provided a clear perspective and perception of their understanding of social class differences.

According to the participants, although they grew up understanding social class differences through a series of behaviors and social indicators, people were not invited, people belonged to certain clubs, attended certain schools, it seemed that the superior class rested with the intellectuals, and the greatest indicator of class or class change was education “ most people would try towards an education that would put them at a level...when we came here, most people lived in Brooklyn, then migrated to Queens and Long Island... that marked the economic power that they had... which would have been the same thing we would have had, if we had stayed in Haiti.”

*Second wave Haitian immigrants (1970-1979).* Participants had a clear understanding of Haitian social structure. It was during these discussions that the distinction of race, skin ton and ethnic differences was introduced, particularly when discussing the higher social class. All of the terms used to identify social class differences, *bourgeoisie*, *peup*, *mounmon*, *habitant* and *restavek* and their meaning were fairly consistent among all participants, divided by wealth, region, education, ethnic racial and background. Haitians of a higher social standing were described as French speaking, fair skinned, of varied ethnic descent and lived in certain neighborhoods in Haiti “light skinned, descendants of Arab people, and um people when , you know, have

money, and you know, you always speak French, no Creole around them.” “They live in Delmas, LaLue, LaBoule” “ People who have privilege, most people who uhh have a lot of money . Social status definitely, white, white, bourgeoisie and they were mostly mulatto”

It seemed like the worst label was “peup” or “ people”, although some of the participants considered themselves and every one of the people. For Haitians, peup had two meanings, someone who is uneducated, poor, without any skills “lower class, you can’t go to school, you can’t read, you can’t eat, you poor you don’t have no money.” “ People are people who are very underprivileged in Haiti.” However it was also a unifying term, as in “We the people” or “of the people”

Habitant, also had two connotations, often considered in the context of farming or agriculture, “people living outside of, if you live outside of Port au Prince you are a an habitant”, there was also the term “Gros habitant”, which denoted someone who has money, or lots of stuff. The term “mounmon” meant people of the mountains “mounmon...the mountains, in the mountains.” “in the mountains it’s like they ummm and they have a different talk, they talk like, they talk like when they talk it’s like from low to top. They say, like a pitch.” “the accent is different they come, they are different accent” And finally restaveks, “maids, restavek is not maid, it’s people who live with you, your parents can’t take care of you...maid is different “ people who live with other people” The concept of restavek was one of exchange, a move out of destitute poverty and the possibility of education for service. The restavek concept seemed to cause little concern, often described in a manner of fact way. It was clear that this was a cultural

norm, despite international concerns as to the exploitation of children in Haitian homes, and the lack of protection on their behalf.

In the United States, these divisions continued to manifest themselves in the context of separate residential background, involvement in Haitian community

because, those people maybe had to leave the country because of uhh, they not enough security, they'd been kidnapped, they had to leave the country. And here, when they come here, it's like they put themselves in the same category as the Cuban or the white people. But, they don't want to deal with us. Well, when I mean us, the people that are not, they are not literate, or, you know? People, you know, that aren't working, they cannot, you know, they need help themselves. So, when they come to Little Haiti, they won't even come to you (second wave participant)

However, the lack of interaction between certain Haitian classes seemed more out of cultural habit than intent, as one participant stated, Haitians of a higher social standing would not have interacted with the Haitians from Little Haiti, had they been in Haiti "no, because in Haiti like we call the bourgeoisie, they stay in Petion-Ville, they won't go downtown like in Cite Soleil, Carrefour... they stay in Fermat...they're not black..." It should be noted that not all participants were in agreement as to the use of these terms, and some talked about how ignorant Haitians were in maintaining these terms in labeling fellow Haitians

*Third wave Haitian immigrants (1980-1989).* Participants had a clear perception of Haitian social classes. The bourgeoisie were the elite class, they had money and lived in certain neighborhoods in Haiti "People with money, live in nice areas." The term

habitant was linked to agriculture “people who do agriculture when you come from the country the always call you habitant”, however the term can be used to insult educated people “somebody can tell me as an educated person, someone can tell me habitant... it’s like a negative connotation... to upset you. The term Peup or the people are perceived as the lower class “Peuple means everybody... lower class people “ One participant mentioned social class differences based on political ties”

Let me give an example, when I receive word to start school... I went to see them... everybody is talking about Lavalas (political party- often affiliated with the “peup”- a movement that takes everything in its way- may be seen as inclusive or may be seen as something that destroys everything in its path- mostly made up of those who are excluded )like they are with Lavalas. He’s like, they look at me with my little glasses. At the time, I was not in that group (third wave participant) As with previous waves of immigrants, class differences seemed to be minimized and changed through education

I am a person of the people... my parents did not have much money... however with education I was able to achieve a certain social status....however I am always linked to the people, despite the fact that I am not considered a person of the people at the time, when I came here there was, you know, the Haitians that I associate myself with were almost people that I , the community did not come from Port au Prince, but they still the type of people that went to school, you know? Even if you came from like umm Cap Haitian or Au Cayes where I come from, where my parents come from... any other place, as long as you were in

school in those provinces so there was no difference, even if you weren't born in Port au Prince, you know, we don't have that problem (third wave participant)

*Fourth wave Haitian immigrants (1991-1995).* Participants were aware of social class differences "it's like a staircase, there are levels Yeah. Yeah, it's like a stair case, in the level. Yeah." There was also a reality that one could move up with the right education and funds, their ability to pay someone to move ahead "the more money you have the more respect you get and this goes for education as well." "if you spoke French than you were considered educated." They also talked about the differences within the Haitian community in the United States, and acknowledged that these differences were carryovers from Haitian culture

there are different groups of Haitian people, a group that serves others... willing to help...and a group that stays apart... there is a possibility that they do not interact with those in need...much like in Haiti...the system in Haiti (fourth wave participant).

There was a clear awareness of a dominant class, a class separated by language, residential background and physical appearance "where they live, they generally speak French or English, they generally don't go to the market place." "they are mulatto" There was also the clear distinction between "peup", the people, everyone and habitant (the farmers) who lived outside of the city limits. There was also mention of color differences and how it impacted interactions between Haitians of different skin tones, and the reality that some Haitians did not want to acknowledge their Haitian identity

Haitians won't socialize with other groups of Haitian...for example your color (dark)... you don't have a chance.to advance, to express yourself... and

interactions with other Haitians is difficult... they may not even acknowledge that they are Haitians (fourth wave participant)

### *Influence of Haitian Upbringing*

*First wave Haitian immigrants (1957-1969).* Participants talked about feeling a sense of isolation, of having to fend for themselves once in the United States with minimal support. In exploring this resounding sense of being alone, it became evident that these participants' shared a similar upbringing in Haiti, whereby parents and house servants, known as "*Bonnes*" took care of everything. In this context, the participants' only obligation was to attend school. The parents played a key role, as one participant stated "...in Haiti, the parents do everything for the children, the children are not prepared. You go for education that's it, that's all you know, that was your job." "Your job is to go to school and be educated," "You are not supposed to do anything at the house, we have maids, we have people." "There is no part-time jobs, you are not supposed to do anything at the house." There was no push towards employment while in school and since the system of part-time jobs did not exist in Haiti, this would not have been an option.

Even the notion of asking for help was foreign to most of the participants, an outcome of their Haitian upbringing, where basic necessities were taken care of "we never asked for help, we did not know to ask for help... we never asked for help, because we could afford a little." It seemed that this complete absolution of understanding or learning to take care of yourself was normalized, and so some of the participants arrived in foreign countries without knowing how to do basic chores, of cooking and cleaning or even washing clothes "you have to shop on your own, cook on your own, I never cooked

before. I had to wash my clothes.” “ I did not know how to crack an egg.” And although they had not come to live this life in the United States, they were keenly aware of its effect on their help-seeking patterns.

In light of this, Haiti had prepared participants by providing participants with a strong work ethic, education and professional development. Participants arrived with a sense of confidence “we had a certain education already in Haiti that could help us choose a profession,” “we were prepared...came with education.” One participant talked about forming a dental association and with the help of political figures, and through advocacy managed to change the regulations for admission of Haitian dentist to the American Dental Association “Haitian dentists could eventually take the same exam that all dental graduates were required to take, ...we lobbied NY and Washington.” Education is highly regarded in Haitian culture, and the participants were clear to relay this message, for some participants education was an indicator of privilege, however one participant talked about being prepared and not privileged “ We came from a prepared class...we came with education.”

Participants also discussed their attempts to reconcile their Haitian education with the United States education system. They talked about the difficulty in obtaining documents from Haiti, and how transfer of credits seemed at times an insurmountable task “they (United States) had absolutely no idea of our education system.” However, this educated background came with some challenges in their quest to find employment. Some participants talked about minimizing their level of education to obtain work, “If you have too much knowledge certain people don’t hire,” “she said just tell them you have a high school education.” Here again, there was a recognition of being highly

qualified, coupled with the reality of having to make ends meet, in a country where participants were experiencing differences in language, social class standing, and differences as immigrants arriving from a Black country, in the words of one participant “When you came here you had to adjust to the lower level that you were not in your country. “This happened to me their (people around them) level of education is also their level of social life, the way they talk.”

Although the experience of these participants could be duplicated in many countries, as most of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 23, leaving their family home for the first time, the experience of the first wave Haitian immigrants was unique in that they were not just leaving a family home, but their country, a country with limited resources and a changing political climate. In addition they were Black immigrants who did not speak English.

The context of immigration for some was forced and unexpected and for others it was with intent and preparation. It is apparent that their social cultural context prepared them with education, determination, a need for independence and a strong sense loyalty to their country. All participants left Haiti with the intent to return and contribute to their country. They arrived in the United States, determined to improve their life and the lives of family members left behind, and despite obstacles, they persevered and succeeded in their endeavors. In the context of help-seeking, they all shared a common bond, a Haitian connection, friend or family member, who initiated their ability to further navigate their resources. However this came at an emotional cost, which for many was the inability to return to Haiti, as they once knew it to be, it was the permanency of their immigration.



*Second wave Haitian immigrants (1970-1979).* In terms of their upbringing, parents or guardians are be the primary resources “ in Haiti I know your father, you know my father too and then if you know, you have any activities, and he said, can you come to my house and then we be open and very reliable,” “your parents take care of everyday things...” One participant talked about following in her mother’s footsteps, as a merchant “Since I was a kid... my mother taught me.” Another participant talked about how his education prepared him

My level of education, like you know, education makes a difference throughout the world. Regardless of ethnic background, age, color, education always makes a difference... my parents did not have much money... however with education I was able to achieve a certain social status...(second wave participant).

One participant talked about how his upbringing instilled a strong sense of social responsibility

I got a very strong sense of solidarity... people to live.. in Haiti..me personally, my family teach me a lot of moral values, and... teach you to do right, you know to to respect people, work hard for what you know work hard to actually, to be a leader not a follower, you know, so that helped me to think ummm, they push you to like yourself, things like that they help you, uhhh and they teach you that you must be whatever you want to do, you can do it. So, that help whatever you do (second wave participant).

Some participants talked about being taught independence, and strong work ethics “my upbringing prepared me for here because in my country we are taught hard work, respect others and be honest in your dealings and God will protect you.”

However in preparing to navigate resources in the United States many participants were not aware of available resources in Haiti and as such the concept of seeking resources was foreign “The government was nonexistent- no services” or you had to have a connection from within the government “In Haiti, you know, when you go to get services, government services, you have to pay, it’s who you know, you need to know people.” Despite the limited resources in Haiti, participants shared a strong desire for work, and need for independence.

*Third wave Haitian immigrants (1980-1989).* Participants talked about their previous experiences the Haiti, particularly the absence of resources and government support, and the need to be self-reliant “I wanted that...but it did not exist... I depended on the church, my family... just ourselves.” Participants talked about having to know somebody in order to obtain any type of government service “I was not depending on others, I knew who to talk to.” It became evident that knowing someone was key to obtaining resources in Haiti.

In this context it seems as though Haitians would have almost no chance of obtaining an education or available resources due to lack of funds and connection within government institutions “you have to know, you have to have somebody within the government. According to one participant, government supported schools are for the privileged, the poor pay for private schools ‘the service that I would have needed from the Haitian government is to go to public school, but public school was not, they don’t give you public school, unless you know somebody within the government to put you in public school over there. So, public school does not exist for people who doesn’t have a

way to pay a private school.” It is critical that someone know someone to obtain most resource.”

*Fourth wave Haitian immigrants (1991-1995).* Participants talked about the absence of resources in Haiti and its impact on their ability to navigate resources in the United States, they were not prepared “Haiti does not have resources, so I was ill prepared for that, but here when I came. “Haiti did not prepare me for the life here, and I can honestly say, it is not the same.” Participants also talked family’s responsibility in their upbringing “my father was there. So, everything I needed, you know, he pretty much, he provided me with assistance in any way.” Well, when I, when I, when I was in Haiti, basically, you know, a family assisted me,” “basically, with family support you are able to survive” One participant talked about the benefits of being employed, of having a job that allowed him to provide for his family, to obtain resources,

You know, I worked at a factory when I was in Haiti. You know, basically, with family support you are able to survive and then being that I lived in the providence, you know, I’m able to, you know, bring in, you know, like good food, you know. So umm, so, I was able to survive (fourth wave participant).

In summary the chapter provided a detailed description of the participants’ characteristics according to their wave of immigration to the United States, a description of the interview protocol and the themes that emerged from focus groups and individual interviews and the participant’s responses by wave of Haitian immigration according to each theme. The next chapter discusses the overall results of the study.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Immigrants' Concept of Social Class and Perspectives on Help-Seeking**

This chapter provides the breadth and depth of the research results and is divided in four sections. The first section gives a visual representation in table format of the categories and final themes that emerged following a critical analysis of the participants' responses. The second section critically examines each category and its related themes, which lead to the identification of a central theme called "connections". This central theme was found to be intrinsically linked to the Haitian cultural construct of social class and the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants. The third section, context of help-seeking behavior includes the results from the research questions. The chapter concludes with my perspective as a researcher.

#### **Table of Categories and Themes**

Data collected via focus groups, individual interviews, field notes and observations resulted in the creation of six categories and 20 themes. The six categories are, 1) Orientation at time of arrival, 2) Haitian Connection, 3) Issues of Trust, 4) Generational effects, 5) Haitian concept of Social Class and 6) Haitian perspective on help-seeking. Each category and their themes are listed in Table 9 and will be discussed in detail.

Table 9: Categories and Themes

CATEGORIES	THEMES
<b>Category 1:</b> <i>Orientation at time of arrival</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departure under duress</li> <li>• Planned departure</li> <li>• U.S. reception</li> <li>• The “Boat People” effect</li> <li>• Spanish immigrants</li> </ul>
<b>Category 2:</b> <i>Haitian connection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point of reference</li> <li>• Proximity of relationship</li> </ul>
<b>Category 3 :</b> <i>Issues of trust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of political climate in country of origin</li> <li>• Limited access to resources in country of origin</li> </ul>
<b>Category 4 :</b> <i>Generational effects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural ties</li> <li>• Immigration perspective</li> </ul>
<b>Category 5 :</b> <i>Haitian concept of social class</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social class and Haitian culture</li> <li>• Sense of fluidity</li> <li>• Social class and race</li> <li>• Social class and education</li> <li>• Haitian identity</li> </ul>
<b>Category 6:</b> <i>Haitian perspective on help-seeking Experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-migration preparedness</li> <li>• Connection in Haiti</li> <li>• Limitations and absence of resources</li> <li>• Autonomy and control over their lives</li> </ul>

### Critical Examination of Categories and Themes

#### *Orientation at Time of Arrival*

The orientation of Haitian immigrants at their time of departure from Haiti was characterized by conditions of departure, decision to leave, and context of arrival as factors which impact immigrants’ adaptation process.

*Departure under duress.* Many participants across all four waves of Haitian immigration left Haiti under duress. Their lives were threatened as were the lives of family members left behind. Some sought refuge in foreign embassies in Haiti or asylum in the United States. They arrived in the United States with a high degree of uncertainty as to their future. Those who left under threats by the Duvalier regime, and were often labeled “Camoquin”, or individuals who caused problems for the government. Although this context of departure was most prevalent among first and some second wave participants; it was also experienced by some of the participants in third and fourth waves.

*Planned departure.* On the other hand, many participants from the first and second wave planned their departure from Haiti. Although most participants arrived directly into the United States, a couple of participants immigrated to France and Canada initially before making their transition to the United States. They left Haiti with the intention of furthering their education, securing employment and employment skills and supporting family members back in Haiti. They were also motivated by the limited access to advance degree programs and job opportunities in Haiti. Immigration to the United States was a present and logical option. In fact participants talked about recognizing early on that immigration might be an inevitable outcome.

Participants from the latter waves (third and fourth) planned departure was mostly the result of reunification with family members and seeking better life opportunities. For many of these participants immigrating to the United States was also a natural transition, given the uncertainty of their future in a country which lacked a stable government, had limited or an absence of resources and job opportunities.

*U.S. reception.* The U.S. reception varied depending on the wave of immigration. For first wave participants, there were pull factors that made their immigration more acceptable. At the time of their arrival to the United States, the country was at war and U.S. immigration laws were eased to allow for foreign skilled laborers and professionals. This was also evident among some second wave participants. However their arrival was not without an understanding that as foreign, Black and French speaking immigrants they would have to try harder to access resources, including education, housing and employment.

The latter waves of Haitian immigrants arrived at a time when U.S. immigration laws became more stringent, especially following the Mariel Boatlift. The Mariel Boatlift marked a turning point for Haitian immigrants who made the United States their initial place of asylum. And unlike their Haitian predecessors, many of these Haitian immigrants were poor, unskilled, had limited education, spoke only Creole and were stigmatized by the AIDS epidemic. They became known as the “boat people”.

*The “Boat People” effect.* Participants from the first and second waves talked about the change in reception and perception of Haitian immigrants following the 1980 Mariel Boatlift which symbolized the first mass exodus of Haitians to the United States. This was often stated among the second wave participants, many of whom arrived prior to Mariel Boatlift. Participants talked about open discrimination and racism against Haitians. In fact, they talked about discrimination at the hands of White Americans, Spanish speaking immigrants, African Americans and other English speaking Black immigrant populations. Although they were cognizant that their treatment was the result of nativism and existing racism, they seemed to feel as though their Haitian identity was

the central reason for this discriminatory treatment. Participants from the latter waves experienced higher degrees of racism and discrimination.

*Spanish immigrants.* Participants across all four waves of immigration identified the discriminatory treatment of Haitians and the favorable treatment given to Spanish speaking immigrant populations. First wave participants discussed the experience of Haitian immigrant in the United States, particularly after the "Mariel Boat lift". They also talked about U.S. policies that favored Cuban immigrants and the services Cubans received during their resettlement process.

Participants from the latter three waves of immigration discussed discrimination from their own personal experiences. They expressed anger and frustration at the treatment of Haitians in the working sector and among social service agencies. They talked about Spanish speaking immigrants being hired first and having easier access to resources. They also mentioned the accommodations afforded to Spanish speaking immigrants in terms of translators and services in Spanish.

#### *Haitian Connection*

As previously stated, participants across all four waves of immigration identified an individual of Haitian descent as their point of contact, upon their arrival in the United States. For the purpose of this study, this individual is labeled Haitian connection. The Haitian connection was central to their initial process of navigating U.S. resources.

*Point of reference.* All participants identified having an individual of Haitian descent as their connection in the United States. This individual could be a direct family member, spouse, parent, or child, or an indirect family member, cousin, aunt, uncle or distant relative. However this individual could also include a close friend of the family or



friend of a friend. In the process of interviewing it became clear that all participants interviewed arrived in the United States with a Haitian connection ready to assist in their initial navigation of resources. This individual provided participants with a point of reference in the United States.

*Proximity of relationships.* Many participants talked about arriving in the United States having “no one” or of being on their own. This was mentioned by participants across all four waves of Haitian immigration. However it became apparent that the concept of having “no one” was based on the proximity of the relationship between the participant and their Haitian connection. The “no one” seemed to indicate an absence of direct family member, someone intimately familiar with the participant. Often these individuals were distant family members, family friends or even complete strangers referred by a family member or close friend.

#### *Issues of Trust*

A recurring theme was the issue of trust. Trust was discussed across among participants from all four waves of Haitian immigration. Trust was a central theme in their adaptation and help-seeking perspective and behavior.

*Influence of political climate in country of origin.* The issue of trust and who to trust was often discussed. For first, and some of the participants in the subsequent waves, the issue of trust was often in relation to political oppression. Many participants expressed concerns as to who to trust in Haiti and the United States, given that many were considered political dissidents. As such participants scrutinized and limited their contacts with fellow Haitians in the United States, for fear that it could jeopardize the welfare of family members left behind in Haiti.

*Limited access to resources in country of origin.* The issue of trust was also discussed in the context of obtaining information or resources, or even job opportunities in the United States. Participants talked about not being able to trust other Haitians when it came to accessing employment, advancing in careers and obtaining information on resources. Although it is easy to dismiss this as an inherent trait, it seems born out of limited or lack of resources, and the instinct to survive in such a limiting context as Haiti. There was an underlying feeling that if you have then I don't. Trust in this context seems to be part of a social fabric based on survival. It was not as pervasive among the first and some second wave participants; however it was clearly a reality for participants who arrived during the latter waves as they attempted to obtain resources in the United States. The reality of life in Haiti was far more ominous than that of participants from the previous waves.

#### *Generational Effects*

Generational effects were reflected in the participants' perspective at the time of arrival and in their current perspective. They represent the effects of passage of time, the historical context of period of immigration, and participant's current lifespan.

*Cultural ties.* The generational effects were evident throughout the focus groups and interviews. First wave participants are strongly attached to their Haitian identity. They are acclimated to the United States, most have lived two thirds of their lives here, and all are U.S. citizens. They have a good command of the English language, and U.S. culture. Their children are American. They are now in the latter part of their lives and many are retired. Although most of their interactions are with compatriots they are not confined to a Haitian community. They travel, they have friends of different ethnic

backgrounds and they are able to navigate their bicultural ties. This was also evident among many of the second wave participants. They too are established in the United States, have or had careers, a good command of the English language, lived over half their lives here and their children are also born in the United States.

Many of the third and fourth wave participants, are younger, many are employed, mostly in blue collar jobs. They too speak English; however their command is not as adept as participants from the previous waves. Fourth wave participants are still closely tied to their Haitian identity in terms of orientation and continued membership in the Haitian community. In fact most of their interactions remain within the confines of this community. These participants had blue collar skills sets and limited education prior to arriving in the United States. They have been marred by conflicts in their Haitian identity as a result of the stigma associated with Haitian immigrants since the Mariel Boatlift. They are clearly aware of discriminatory treatment against them; however remain steadfast in their attempts to secure resources and a better quality of life.

*Immigration perspective.* Participants from the first wave arrived as “temporary immigrants”, regardless of their context of departure. They expected to someday return to Haiti and continue their careers and their lives. The United States was a means to an end. They all had intentions of returning and contributing to Haiti’s economy. At the time of their departure they did not anticipate that the Duvalier regime would last for almost 30 years.

This “temporary” perception was not detected among latter wave Haitian immigrants. Their departure was planned as a direct result of the breakdown in Haiti’s government and overall infrastructure. Immigration for them was their only means out of

such a desperate climate. They are closer in proximity to Haiti than participants from previous waves and may travel back on occasion, or send money to help family members left behind. In addition they contribute heavily to Haiti's economy by sending resources to family members left behind in the form of money, food, clothes and basic goods.

### *Haitian Concept of Social Class*

Understanding the breadth and depth of Haitian immigrants' perspective of social class was central to this study. The social class differences were evident in each wave of Haitian immigration and reflected in participants' level of engagement, their racial make-up, command of host language, and occupation.

*Social class and Haitian culture.* Participants provided a very clear and consistent pattern of describing the Haitian social structure across all four waves of Haitian immigration. The social hierarchy is differentiated by racial and ethnic background, residential background, linguistic differences, education, wealth, political views.

Although specific attributes were linked to social standing, bourgeoisie were typically lighter in skin tone, spoke French, reflected ethnic differences, and lived in the mountains surrounding Port-Au Prince, and the people, were poorer, less educated, had a darker complexion and less resources, for most participants, social class was not necessarily a permanent standing.

*Sense of fluidity.* Participants from all four waves of Haitian immigration acknowledged that one could move up from their current social standing based on wealth, education, occupation and personal connections. Social class was not perceived as a permanent standing and it was believed that with the right resources, both in terms of

connection, financial resources and education, one could change their social standing regardless of their place of origin in Haiti.

*Social class and race.* Racial and ethnic differences did permeate the Haitian class structure. Haitians who were lighter, had more European or Middle Eastern features were often identified as members of the highest social class, whereas darker Haitians, with more African features were often linked to the lowest social class.

In terms of discrimination, race played a secondary role to wealth and education. According to participants from the first wave, a person could be wealthy and Black, and considered White, and a person could be White and poor and considered Black. Discriminatory treatment in Haiti seems to focus on class standing as opposed to race; however social class differences are delineated by race. Across all waves of Haitian immigration, participants perceived social class structure as more clearly defined by education, financial resources and access to connections in Haiti.

*Education and wealth.* According to participants across all waves of Haitian immigration, wealth and education were key factors of Haitian social structure. Wealth provided a certain residential distancing from other classes of Haitians and access to modern resources. In addition it allowed one to pay connections in Haiti to access admission to schools, job opportunities and special favors. However education was the key factor to social standing and shifts in social standing. Most participants talked about education as a means to access knowledge, to gain control over one's life and obtain better job opportunities. Education became a recurring theme among all participants across all four waves of Haitian immigration. In fact, participants from all four waves of

Haitian immigration expressed a commitment to empowering other Haitian immigrants through education.

Education is highly valued in Haitian society and is recognized as a key factor to improving one's life. Therefore access to educational resources is vital. In its absence, a Haitian's social standing is fixed, and this is evident among Haitians of lower social class standing, many of whom have limited access to education due to their inability to pay for school and school supplies, and their lack of connections in Haitian institutions.

*Haitian identity.* Participants across all four waves of Haitian immigration had a strong sense of Haitian identity. According to participants this identity can be a divisive and unifying presence. It was a divisive force as Haitians attempted to distance themselves from the stigmas associated with Haitian immigrants in the United States following the Mariel Boatlift, the AIDS epidemic of the 80's and the on-going political problems in Haiti that have rendered the country in a state of despair.

However it is also a unifying force in terms of differentiating Haitian immigrants from African American and other Black immigrant populations, and by affirming the Haitian identity and Haiti's history as a the first Black independent nation. It is also an element of pride.

As well, it created a sense of unity within the Haitian community in the United States as they addressed the discriminatory treatment of Haitian immigrants in South Florida, whether it is the detaining of Haitian immigrants upon their arrival in the United States or the treatment of Haitian immigrants at the hands of service providers and community businesses. Furthermore, first wave and second wave participants talked about their commitment to improving the lives of new Haitian immigrants in the context

of education and language skills, a sense of giving back to the Haitian community. Third and fourth wave Haitian immigrants maintained their sense of unity by developing a Haitian community, and providing resources within this community, creating a foundation.

### *Haitian Perspective on Help-Seeking Experience*

Haitian immigrants' perspective on help-seeking was assessed in terms of their pre-migration experience, Haiti's socio-economic and political climate at the time of departure and the Haitian culture's perception of help-seeking.

*Pre-migration preparedness.* In the context of help-seeking, most immigrants arrived in their early 20's and as such most of their understanding of help-seeking was confined within the family unit. A unit composed of parents and grand-parents and for many "*Bonnes*" (servants). This was most reflective among first and second wave participants. They stated that their parents did everything, and that the child's role or job was first and foremost to be educated. The role of parent is also reflected in all subsequent waves of Haitian immigrants, however not necessarily that of having "*Bonnes*".

Many participants left Haiti as they were beginning their adult life, their education was in progress and many had not yet worked outside the family unit. This was particularly evident among first wave and some second wave immigrants. However some did have a college degree or profession, and through Haitian connections in the United States, were able to gain access to professional programs or similar professions in the United States.

Although some participants from the third and fourth wave had traveled to the United States several times prior to immigrating, most arrived with a less education and even less work skills than participants from the earlier waves. Haiti's socio, political and economic conditions had only worsened since the arrival of Haitians from the first wave, leaving most Haitians with menial jobs to no job opportunities, and absent of resources. Most participants became employed in the United States.

*Connection in Haiti.* Participants from all four waves of Haitian immigration discussed the importance of having connections in Haiti. These were individuals who had access to resources, to other individuals who could assist in school admissions, job opportunities, visa applications, and all other facets of life, social, economic and political. First wave Haitian immigrants called them “*Parrain*” or Godfather. It seemed that in the absence of these individuals, it would be difficult to navigate resources in Haiti. At the time of their departure, first wave participants talked about limited access to professional education and job opportunities, the demands outweighed the availability. Under these conditions, a connection was vital. This was also discussed among participants in all subsequent waves, one had to know someone to get resources to advance them in life, this could often require money, and so those who most benefit in this system, are those who have a certain income or wealth and know how.

*Limitations and absence of resources.* Many participants arrived in the United States unaware of available resources, particularly those from the latter two waves of immigration. They often discussed the limited or lack of resources in Haiti as their point of reference. They did not know, and did not know to know. This reality seemed to only worsen over the years, as Haiti's infrastructure became almost nonexistent. Most



participants from all four waves of immigration talked about seeking support and resources within the family unit first or their church family. This is partly due to the Haitian infrastructure and partly due to Haitian culture.

*Autonomy and control over their lives.* All participants expressed a strong sense of independence, a commitment to self-sufficiency. They were aware that in Haiti there are more people than available resources. Given the limited or absence of critical resources, or challenges in accessing these resources, it would seem difficult to create or maintain a sense of social responsibility. The competition for access to resources creates an “every man is an island” mentality. For the most part, participants talked about having to do things for themselves and having to be careful as to the information they provide to others, particularly other Haitians. Also expressed was this need to keep issues private. All problems remain and are addressed within the family unit or religious practices. It was clear that Haiti’s society demands that one compete for resources. This is an inevitable means of survival.

### The Context of Help-Seeking Behavior

This study set out to explore social class as a cultural construct and its influence on the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants across four waves of Haitian immigration to the United States. This study painted a picture of the context of help-seeking that followed the expectation suggested by existing research, but also one that was surprising

### *Cultural Beliefs about Help-Seeking by Period of Immigration*

Period of immigration did not differ in terms of their cultural beliefs or perceptions on help-seeking. Across all four waves of Haitian immigration, help-seeking

was framed, instead within the context of connections. These connections were individuals who could help participants' access resources, in education, admission to professional programs, and job opportunities. For first and second wave Haitian immigrants, the term "*Parrain*" symbolized this cultural reality. The "*Parrain*" could speak on the behalf of the participant. In the absence of a "*Parrain*" it was difficult to navigate resources in Haiti, to move ahead with studies and or job opportunities. The demand was too great, and as participants stated there were very few spots available for admission and employment opportunities in comparison to the number of applicants. As such it was critical to have someone work on your behalf.

Latter waves of Haitian immigrants also talked about the importance of knowing someone, and this knowing could also involve having to pay someone for their service. This was a cultural reality for all participants regardless of their immigration wave. As one participant from the second wave noted government funded schools are often only accessed by students from upper class backgrounds due to their connections and financial resources. As a result, students from lower class backgrounds are forced to pay for their education in private schools and their lack of available funds to afford education often limit their educational goals.

### *Factors Influencing Cultural Beliefs*

The basis of beliefs concerning help-seeking was consistent across all waves of Haitian immigration. Participants across all four waves of immigration arrived in the United States with the understanding that having connections is important to obtaining needed resources. This was evidenced among first and second wave participants at their initial phase of immigration. However in the process of acclimation, employment, and

educational advancement; they adjusted their help-seeking patterns to that of the U.S. culture. They do not rely solely on a Haitian connection to meet their needs.

It should be noted that many participants from the first and second wave of immigration left Haiti as political dissidents under the Duvalier regime. However most participants across all four waves of Haitian immigration left Haiti as a direct outcome of what I term as the secondary effects of the Haiti's enduring political dissension, and more specifically the Duvalier regime and that of subsequent government entities. These secondary effects left most Haitians in abject poverty and left the country with limited resources, educational advancement and employment opportunities. As Haiti's infrastructure continued its social, economic and political decline, immigration for many Haitians was and is a viable and logical solution.

As the socio-economic and political conditions in Haiti became increasingly dire, the need for accessing connections also increased. As such the importance of having Haitian connections remains a vital component to help-seeking, particularly among the latter waves of Haitian participants. Many arrived in the United States with limited to no previous knowledge or access to resources, including government sponsored resources. This absence of knowledge was further compounded by an absence of job skills, educational opportunities or advancement, training and job opportunities.

In addition, many participants arrived in the United States with a tenuous immigration status, limited command of the English language and limited financial resources. They also faced issues of race, poverty, and the stigma of AIDS. As a result, support from other Haitian immigrants (connections) and the Haitian community were

and are important resources to understanding their cultural orientation as Haitian immigrants attempt to access resources.

All participants recognized the importance of a Haitian connection in the United States as a catalyst to accessing resources. This individual or Haitian connection may not have remained with them throughout their adaptation process; however the Haitian connection greeted them and started their adaptation to U.S. culture.

### *The Role of Social Class in Help-Seeking*

According to participants across all four waves of Haitian immigration, the role of social class is significant in Haitian immigrants' help seeking behaviors in the Haiti; specifically in the context of education, occupation and financial resources and having connections. Haitian social class structure has a small established elite class, less than 5% of the Haitian population. This elite class has access to all available resources, typically they are lighter skin tone, of Middle Eastern, European or mixed background (mulattos), and they possess a strong command of the French language and maintain contacts within established and secured connections.

Although factors of education, occupation and wealth in the context of financial resources were most significant in the access and availability of resources, connections often initiated this process, these opportunities for advancement.

Education allowed opportunity for certain occupations, which then allowed for better financial resources and this increased access to connections, and connections with power in all facets of Haitian society. These factors were critical in changing one's social standing. Although participants typically linked race and skin tone to social standing,

they were cognizant that social standing could change based on financial resources and therefore change the perception of one's race and skin tone. As participants agreed, one could be Black and rich, and therefore considered White, or one could be White and poor and considered Black. Although Haitians are aware of racial differences in skin tone and physical features, and link these characteristics to social standing, these characteristics can be attributed to anyone depending on their wealth.

Across all waves of immigration, participants identified education as the catalyst to change, change in awareness, access, opportunity and sense of preparedness. One participant from the second wave talked about being a person of the people, coming from the people, but that his education moved him into a different social standing, and allowed him to broaden his access and his impact on the Haitian community in Haiti and the United States. Education is revered in Haitian society; it is considered a tool of empowerment. Participants from the first wave talked about arriving from a "prepared" class as opposed to a "privileged" class. This preparedness was directly linked to education.

Social class standing in the United States had less of an impact in participants' help-seeking behaviors in their initial phase of resettlement. In fact, participants from all four waves of immigration relied on a Haitian connection at their initial point of arrival. Although this Haitian connection could assist participants' in obtaining basic resources such as housing, transportation and possible job opportunities, they could not necessarily provide all resources. As such, participants' help-seeking behavior was also dependent on this Haitian connections' knowledge of resources or additional connections who could further assist the participant navigate their specific needs. As a result many participants

across all waves of Haitian immigration talked about being on their own, and having to figure things out on their own despite having a connection.

However, as their adaptation process continued, participants with greater education, professional skills and informed contacts remained or moved up from the social standing they had prior to leaving Haiti. This was evidenced across all four waves of Haitian immigrants. The first and second wave immigrants moved into middle class or upper middle class neighborhoods, entered professional careers in medicine, education, engineering and business, and learned to navigate the U.S. system in similar fashion as their U.S. counterparts. Although they experienced racism and discrimination, their education seemed to minimize their impact, as did their sense of cultural identity and temporal perspective on their immigration.

Participants from the latter two waves, in fact did the same. Many arrived from lower social standings in Haiti, and were greeted by Haitian connections in the United States who shared similar backgrounds; as such many entered the same labor markets, neighborhoods and obtained similar resources as those of their Haitian connections. However unlike their predecessors from the first and second waves, participants' navigation was further compounded by nativism, racism, the stigma of AIDS and Voodoo and job skills, education, and language barriers as many only spoke Creole.

#### *The Role of Social Class in the Use of Social Resources*

The role of social class in Haitian immigrant utilization of social resources is significant in the areas of education, job opportunities, and access to basic human needs. Haitians who have financial resources, attained a higher level of education, and have access to informed and powerful connections have greater access to social resources.

All four waves of Haitian immigrants arrived from a country where social resources were limited to nonexistent. As such, they had a very limited understanding or experience with outside entities, with the exception of medical facilities, school system and an awareness of services provided by non- government organizations (NGO). In fact government was not viewed as an entity that could provide services to its citizens. In asking participants about government support, many balked at the idea that such a thing could exist, or laughed and often responded by asking, what government? As such most participants sought resources within their family or by way of connections. According to participants across all four waves of immigration, they did not seek resources from the NGO. This was evidenced regardless of social standing in Haiti.

First and second wave participants looked to their parents to meet their basic needs, and once in the United States initially sought assistance by way of a Haitian connection. Many talked about being either unaware of existing resources in Haiti or felt that they could manage on their own or within their social support system. Among latter wave participants, many arrived in the United States, with a tenuous immigration status and limited to no knowledge of resources, as such they continued to seek support within the family or close knit friends, and some as a result of their immigration status intentionally remained hidden from government entities. However as a Haitian community established itself in South Florida, participants began to seek resources within this community, and via these resources may have accessed government sponsored services or grass root organizations.

### *The Role of Social Class as a Cultural Construct*

In this study, social class as a cultural construct played a significant role on help-seeking behavior among all Haitians immigrants, specifically the importance of having Haitian connections in gaining access to resources. The study also identified education, occupation and income as significant factors to accessing and securing these connections. The influence of connections was observed as a reality in Haiti and in the United States. This connection could link participant to needed resources, admission to schools, access to housing, education and ensure their safety. In the United States, this connection facilitated their initial adaptation in the context of immigration, housing, education and job opportunities.

Education was a significant factor influencing help-seeking behaviors of Haitian immigrants in both Haiti and the United States. Education afforded one the opportunity to move into different social standing, gain access to key resources, advance in careers that were more profitable and seemed to provide participants with more control over their environment. In its absence, participants had little options in Haiti, and subsequently upon their arrival in the United States. Wealth or access to financial resources also influenced access or furthered access to connections, and subsequently available resources.

*Language.* Although language was identified as a barrier in the United States, over time participants could navigate language, some did so by remaining in the Haitian enclave, and a labor market that required less verbal interaction while others learned the language of the host country and could better navigate the resources.



*Sensitivity of service providers.* First and second wave Haitian immigrants relied heavily on their Haitian connections to obtain resources and navigate the U.S. system. These resources included admission to academic institutions, job opportunities, immigration services, and housing. However participants from the latter waves of immigration entered a climate far less welcoming, and experienced greater levels of racism and discrimination. Their arrival was further compounded by the absence of Creole speaking service personnel or personnel of Haitian descent who would not acknowledge their Haitian descent. Many participants expressed difficulty gaining information or access to needed resources, such as job opportunities, education and immigration services. However as the Haitian community grew, so did services for Haitian immigrants, as such those who arrived in the last wave were able to benefit from established Haitian communities, and more knowledgeable and culturally sensitive service providers.

*Immigration status.* Immigration status was also a barrier for many participants across all waves of immigration. The first and second wave Haitian participants arrived under various visas, student visas, visitor visas, and some allowed those visas to expire, however all eventually obtained U.S. citizenship. For participants from the latter waves, some arrived in the United States having been sponsored, some on visitor visas and some arrived undocumented. Many participants sought asylum upon their arrival, and although denied remained in the United States, and some continue to be undocumented. However as the Haitian community grew and resources were more available, the community seemed to serve as a buffer that allowed participants to obtain resources.

*Context of arrival.* At the time first and second wave participants arrived, the United States was at war and sought foreign workers to fulfill the work gap left by United States workers. Haitians arrived over a period of time, their numbers were not particularly impressive, and many were educated and with the assistance of a Haitian connection, were able to obtain their primary resources, housing and employment. At the time of their arrival, they were not identified as a burden to the U.S. economy.

However the latter wave participants arrived in a climate that was stunned by their presence. In fact the United States had never been considered a first place of asylum prior to the arrival of Haitian and Cuban immigrants during the Mariel Boatlift. They arrived by boat and in large numbers. They were poor, black, had minimal education, were believed to be carriers of the AIDS' virus and voodoo worshipers. Considered economic refugees, they were also disintitled to refugee services, which further compounded their resettlement process. Their treatment at the hands of U.S. immigration laws were far different than those of their Cuban counterparts, who arrived during the same period, as political refugees.

#### My Perspective as Researcher.

Initially, I struggled to identify my research topic. However when I wrote a paper in my doctoral program on the Haitian Interdiction Agreement, a U.S. immigration policy that exposed the differential treatment of Haitian immigrants as economic refugees versus political refugees, my research interest was sparked. As I became more knowledgeable of the subject matter, I noticed an absence of literature on the Haitian immigration experience of my father's generation. My father's generation represented those Haitians who had come following the installation of the "Papa Doc" Duvalier regime during the

late 50's. So now, I found myself not only interested in immigration policies as they pertained to various immigrant groups, I also wanted to know how my father's generation navigated this new country called the United States of America.

In the research process, I began to gain a better understanding of my own upbringing as a child of a privileged Haitian immigrant. In this context, not only did I want to know the immigration experience of my father's generation, I wanted to see this experience in the context of the four largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States in order to obtain a broader perspective on the ways that various waves of Haitian immigrants across the spectrum of social class sought help to meet those challenges. Although several factors were identified as impeding the help-seeking process of Haitian immigrants, such as race, religious practices, language barriers, issues of poverty, and education, many studies seemed to depict the immigration experience of my father's generation as absent of challenges based on their social class standing. As such, I was interested in assessing the impact of social class in the help-seeking process.

Since I had come to understand that my perspective of Haitian culture was based on my family's social class context, and this experience was one of privilege or in the words of one participant of "preparedness", I wanted to explore this with Haitians from my family's immigration wave and to compare their experience with that of Haitians who had arrived in subsequent waves. In this research process, I became acutely aware of the fact that Haitian immigrants in the United States were not a homogenous group. I learned of other Haitians, and the reality that their experiences, based on their wave of immigration, were somewhat distinct. And this distinction was often based on Haitian

social structure which includes political beliefs, race, ethnic background, education, residential background and wealth.

In meeting the participants, I felt a need to establish my credibility as a person of Haitian descent familiar with Haitian culture. Having spent part of my childhood in Haiti, at the time of both Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier, I knew Haiti before it became today's Haiti. Although this fact garnered a certain level of acceptance from participants as I recounted events and places in Haiti that no longer existed or if they did were no longer as they once were intended, I was still a Canadian, who spoke French and understood Creole but did not speak it and who grew up in North America. And if not for the fact that participants knew the recruiters, I believe I would have had a more challenging time establishing myself in the research context and building rapport. Haitians are a private people, and this was an awareness I had prior to engaging in this research, from my own family experience.

In most focus groups and individual interviews, there were time constraints, participants were hoping for a brief time frame, and so at times, I felt as though I hurried some of the information, out of respect for the participants. I was conflicted, as I wanted more, and yet was appreciative of the fact that they came to participate. In so doing, I maintained my role as a researcher in the qualitative process. I maintained my role as an observer, mindful of my own knowledge and experience with Haitian culture, I reflected on my approach, my tone, my level of engagement and how my participants might see me, feel in this research environment, issues of privacy and confidentiality and ultimately respect for the participant.

I assessed my own biases as they pertained to Haitian culture in general, what I came in having experienced, whether this was clouding my perception and interpretation of the data. I remained open to feedback whether by participants or recruiters to assess how I or the context might impact participants' level of engagement. In the data collection process, I remained cognizant of potential language barriers, time constraints and the participants' level of comfort.

I had to remain very flexible given that meeting times were not always set in stone. I was sometimes contacted at a moment's notice to meet a participant. I also had to remain sensitive and empathetic to participants' responses, especially their nonverbal cues, their body language. The participants' ability to choose was strongly supported, whether to provide information or leave the research environment, the importance of their responses and the appreciation of those responses in moving towards a research outcome.

There were times when I felt uncertain as to my level of probing as I attempted to respect their level of engagement and assess a particular pattern that emerged from my data. My analysis of the data was continuous, throughout the data collection process and months later, as I kept assessing and re-assessing the information. As a resolution, I hope to conduct future research that may allow me the opportunity to probe certain content in greater depth.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Discussion and Implications for Social Work**

The intent of this exploratory study was to examine social class in relation to the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants in the United States. A qualitative approach was utilized to obtain rich and substantive information from the perspective of Haitian immigrants who arrived in the United States during the four largest waves of Haitian immigration, 1957 wave, the 1970 wave, the 1980 wave and the 1991. Although the study was not guided by an established theory, it did present segmented assimilation as a theoretical concept, and social class on help-seeking behavior as a conceptual framework.

The research questions were derived from a review of the literature on immigrant help-seeking studies and specifically help-seeking studies of Haitian immigrants. These studies identified several factors that influence immigrant help-seeking behaviors, including cultural beliefs, context of arrival and departure, immigration status, language barriers, and education. These studies are reviewed in Chapter 3.

In addition, the research questions stem from my experience as the child of a Haitian immigrant from the first wave, and personal observations of the Haitian culture and its social class divisions. In both, academic and personal life, I began to understand my own social class construct and its direct link to Haiti, and Haitian social structure. Having spent time in Haiti, New York and South Florida, I observed a clear division of Haitian immigrants according to their social class standing and immigration wave.

As a social worker, I feel this study could add to the limited research of Haitian immigrants in the United States. I feel that Haitian immigrants are in a particularly vulnerable position given the many additional barriers they faced when entering the

United States, including the AIDS stigma, the language barrier and the endemic poverty and political context that affected almost every Haitian immigrants' decision to leave Haiti. As a result, many arrived in the United States with little preparation in navigating social resources.

Most of what we know of Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behaviors comes from sociological, anthropological, and medical research. There is a limited number of empirical research in the area of social work. These studies have primarily focused on Haitian immigrants who arrived during the third wave of Haitian immigration, many of whom came from a lower social class. However, Haitian immigrants in the United States represent several social classes, and therefore documenting their experiences provides a broader perspective and understanding of the Haitian immigrant experience from all facets of Haiti's social structure.

This research contributes to the existing literature of immigrant help-seeking behavior by providing an additional context from which social workers may better understand the perspective of immigrants, not only from Haiti, but other less economically developed countries, many of whom are raised in the absence of social resources, and arrive in the United States unfamiliar or unaware of resources that may facilitate their adaptation.

In addition, social workers may be unaware of immigrants' help-seeking strategies, or beliefs beyond formal resources. In other words, having been raised with limited or absence of social resources, many immigrants develop alternative means of accessing and meeting their needs. As such, this research allows social workers to further

recognize, respect and support immigrants' help-seeking behaviors and beliefs while assisting them to navigate the U.S. system.

Haitian immigrants represent a unique and challenging immigration population for social workers, and other social service providers. They arrive speaking Creole, in an English speaking country and often times, a Spanish speaking region, like Florida. As such, many remain within the confines of the Haitian community for continued support and access to resources. A better understanding of the influence and impact of Haitian culture that includes its social structure and endemic poverty on Haitian immigrants' help-seeking behaviors can enlighten social workers working with this community.

The findings are consistent with existing studies on Haitian immigrant help-seeking, which identified such factors as context of arrival, language barriers, immigration status, educational attainment, income and occupation as influencing help-seeking behavior. McNeece and colleagues (2002) found that Haitian immigrants were at a greater disadvantage than their Cuban counterparts in Florida's education, social services and criminal justice systems, due to their level of education, employable skills and economic base. Language barriers were also shown to be problematic in the context of help-seeking, particularly for Haitian immigrants who arrived during the latter waves. In this study, participants, regardless of immigration wave, identified language as a barrier in their attempts to navigate resources. Although first and second wave participants spoke Creole and French, they often found that their English proficiency limited their access to certain jobs. However French allowed some of these participants to find employment in translation. For latter wave participants, many of whom only spoke Creole, they faced additional challenges. They had limited access to Creole speaking



interpreters, and this limited utilization of resources. Bronstein and Kelly (1998) found that language barriers limited Haitian families' access to school linked resources in Miami.

The fact that most participants arrived from a country with limited resources, was consistent with previous studies. In a study on utilization of mental health resources, Portes and collaborators (1992) found that prior knowledge of resources in country of origin had an impact on immigrants' approach and knowledge to mental health delivery systems in the host country.

The issue of trust, based on Haiti's political climate and limited resources, was found to influence help-seeking among participants representing all four waves of immigration. This finding was consistent with previous studies (Bronstein & Kelly, 1998; Mateyer, Jean-Louis & Madison, 2004; Stepick, Stepick & Kretsedemas, 2001) that identified rampant corruption, political violence and limited access to resources in Haiti, as having created a climate of distrust with formal institutions. This distrust persists in the Haitian community.

However, this study also advanced our understanding of help-seeking behaviors of Haitian immigrants by identifying the importance of social networks. Regardless of their context of departure or arrival, immigration status, language barriers, racism and discrimination, and social status, all Haitian immigrants in this study had a connection in the United States. This connection was an individual of Haitian descent, and was instrumental in initiating the help-seeking process.

## Significance of Social Connections to Help-Seeking Behaviors

In all aspects of the Haitian experience analyzed in this study, orientation at time of arrival, Haitian connection, issues of trust, generational effects, Haitian concept of social class and Haitian perspective on help-seeking experience revealed that “connection” was the recurring theme in the process of help-seeking and that social class influenced this access to connection, and in turn influenced help-seeking behaviors.

### *Orientation at Time of Arrival*

In obtaining the participants orientation in the context of departure and U.S. reception, it was evident that from pre-migration, transition and post-migration, Haitian immigrants across all four waves of immigration relied on an established Haitian connection to assist them in obtaining resources. These resources could include job opportunities, relocation, and access to education, transportation and housing.

### *Haitian Connection*

This Haitian connection was the point of reference for all participants and the strength of the connection was often based on the proximity of the relationship. Many participants stated that they had “nobody”, however further probing revealed that they had someone of Haitian descent at their initial arrival in the United States. For many, however this someone was not a close relative, such as a spouse, child or parent. For many participants in the absence of a close family member, they often felt a sense of isolation, of being left on their own.

Although established Haitian connections were responsible for their ability to initiate help-seeking behaviors in the United States, there was recognition among all

participants that they would have to seek additional connections to access their more specific needs in the context of career opportunities and access to educational institutions.

### *Issues of Trust*

The issue of trust was often discussed among participants, across all four waves of immigration. For many first and some second wave participants, given their context of departure, as political dissidents or associates, trusting the connection was very critical, as many feared for the safety of their families left back in Haiti. For participants from the latter waves, issues of trust centered on accessing resources, and the connection's willingness to provide information that could better prepare the participant in their adaptation process. Participants talked about feeling as though service providers of Haitian descent were reluctant to provide them with resources, at times even pretending they were not Haitians or could not speak Creole. This was also confirmed by a service provider (who did not want to be identified) who seemed to feel as though there were intent among Haitians not to promote each other in sectors of education, and career opportunities.

### *Generational Effect*

There were clear differences in adaption among participants given the various times of arrival in the United States. However, all participants remained linked to their Haitian identity and Haitian connections. For participants from the first and second wave, who have remained in the United States more than two thirds of their lives, their help-seeking behaviors moved beyond a Haitian enclave, and mirrored many of the behaviors of their U.S. counterparts. They had a profession, strong command of the English language, were now U.S. citizens and their children were born and raised in the United

States, as such their reliance on Haitian connections was in the form of friends and family. For participants from the latter waves, their Haitian connection remains tied to a strong Haitian enclave in Miami. They tend to remain within this enclave as a means of obtaining resources, including education, translation, legal immigration assistance, and housing.

### *Haitian Concept of Social Class*

Although all participants shared similar thoughts and perspectives on the Haitian social structure, in the context of wealth, education, skin tone and ethnic background, there was a sense that social class standing was fluid and therefore could change based on education, access to financial resources and connections. In Haiti having a connection could provide access to needed resources, including education and job opportunities. And education was considered among all participants as the catalyst to changing one's quality of life and social standing. It was considered a tool of empowerment. Education provided access to connections, additional resources, knowledge and overall control over one's decisions.

### *Haitian Perspective on Help-Seeking*

Almost all participants left Haiti as young adults. As such much of their help-seeking behavior was in the context of their immediate family members on whom they relied to meet their basic needs. First wave and some second wave participants talked about education being their only responsibility. And given Haiti's infrastructure, there was no working outside the family home, and the concept of part-time work did not exist. They arrived with little to no concept of help-seeking, particularly in the context of social

resources. However they all left Haiti knowing that someone in the United States would greet them, and provide some sense of orientation at their initial point of arrival.

The latter wave participants came with even less resources to access in Haiti, like some of the first wave participants they were not aware or prepared to navigate U.S resources on their own, and also relied on connection to assist them in the absence of an established Haitian community. As their presence grew in the South Florida region, so did an established Haitian community. This community continues to provide a vast support network in areas of business, child welfare, immigration services, education and workforce. Last wave participants found this Haitian enclave which facilitated their access to resources, both within this community and beyond.

#### Findings Vis –a- Vis Conceptual Frameworks

##### *Segmented Assimilation*

The findings from the perspective of the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation, indicate that Haitian immigrants' adaptation was influenced by several factors which impacted their degree of assimilation to U.S. culture. These factors included, pre-migration experience, time and context of arrival in the United States, U.S. immigration policies, immigration status, language barriers, exposure to racial discrimination, communities of resettlement, and type of labor market.

Most Haitian immigrants arrived absent of supportive resources, and unlike their Cuban counterparts, who experienced a linear assimilation; Haitians had to rely on Haitian connections and the resources and opportunities afforded by these connection to navigate U.S. resources. As well, absent during the first three waves of immigration was a Haitian enclave that could have delayed or eliminated the assimilation process by

providing a buffer against issues of immigration, language barriers, cultural identity and norms, access to resources and job skills. As such Haitian immigrants' connections were scattered throughout the community, and often these acquaintances had similar context of departure in terms of education, job skills, command of the English language and social standing in Haiti. Therefore, Haitian immigrants navigated resources with the same perspectives as those of their Haitian connection. For some, this meant the difference between linear assimilation and downward assimilation. First wave participants experienced a more linear form of assimilation given their established connections and their educational background, this was not the case for participants who arrived in the third wave, many of whom arrived with limited financial resources, education and had to rely on other Haitian connections in the same predicament.

Although a Haitian enclave known as Little Haiti was established in Miami, which did and continues to provide a support system to Haitian immigrants in South Florida - through businesses, and social resources, and political action, the enclave is characterized by a high degree of poverty, unemployment and crime. However, despite this reality, many Haitian immigrants have succeeded in the fields of business, medicine, education, social services, and political representation (Zephir, 2004).

### *Social Class*

This study examined the concept of social class as a cultural construct and its impact on help-seeking behaviors. In most immigrant help-seeking studies, social class is conceptualized as socio economic status (SES) and characterized by occupation, education and income.

Although these characteristics are relevant to Haitian immigrant help-seeking behavior in the United States; they are also conditioned by Haitian cultural values and behaviors, which place a high degree of importance on connections. As such Haitian help-seeking behaviors are linked directly to cultural values and behaviors, specifically the importance of education and the importance of having connections in both Haiti and the United States. In fact, in Haitian social structure, connections are vital in maintaining privilege and initiating changes in social standing. In the absence of education and connections, most Haitians in Haiti remain at a disadvantage. They lack the income to acquire an education; as such their ability to connect to individuals in positions of control and power and to move out of their social condition is limited to non-existent. Their reality is further compounded by an absence of government support in meeting their basic needs, food, shelter, education and income.

As in previous studies on help-seeking, this study also identified the influence and impact of social class on help-seeking behavior. The SES factors of income, occupation and education are also determinants in the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants in the United States. However, this study revealed that SES encompasses much more than income, occupation and education and this was evident among participants in this study, all of whom represented each facet of Haitian social structure.

The findings indicate that Haitian cultural beliefs and behaviors are strong indicators of help-seeking, specifically as they relate to “knowing someone”, or having connections in both Haiti and the United States and how one accesses these connection is linked directly to social class. Previous studies on immigrant help-seeking found that cultural factors, such as shame and “loss of face”, were indicators of help-seeking

behaviors (Gong and collaborators, 2003; Youssef and Dean, 2006) For Haitian immigrants, issues of privacy and pride are cultural factors that impacted their help-seeking behavior (Albertini & Barsky, 2003; Bastien, 1998). This study shows that the concept of “knowing someone” was also a cultural factor that impacted Haitian immigrants’ help-seeking behavior. At the same time, this cultural factor is also subject to a Haitian’s social class standing in Haiti and in the United States.

A Haitian’s social class allows access to certain connections, and this access is contingent upon education, wealth, residential background, family name, occupation, political affiliations, and language. Although most Haitians of higher social standing are of European descent or mulattos, and the Haitian perspective links skin tone, race and ethnic differences to social standing, social class is a fluid concept. Participants believed if given access and opportunity to education, and subsequently job opportunities and income, one can change their social standing regardless of skin tone and racial differences. However, in Haiti, this is almost an impossible feat in the absence of education and connections with power and influence.

This was evident as well in the United States. First and second wave Haitian immigrants, those who left voluntarily and those fled the Duvalier regime, had a strong education background and or strong professional job skills. Most had connections in the United States from a similar social class background, who could provide support and access to resources. As such, participants were better prepared to navigate resources in the United States and they did, eventually successfully establishing themselves in the United States.



Participants from the latter waves also connected with Haitians from their same social class standing. However many of these connections faced similar issues, such as tenuous immigration status, poverty, limited English proficiency, limited job skills and education. As a result their access to resources was more limiting, and placed many at risk for continued poverty.

The study findings are consistent with immigrant and specifically Haitian immigrant help-seeking research which has identified several factors faced by immigrant populations as they adapt to their new environment. These factors included context of departure and arrival, education, language, SES, immigration status, established ethnic enclave, resettlement resources, cultural factors and reception and sensitivity of service providers. The results of this study were consistent with these previous findings.

Central to the purpose of this study, however was to examine the role of social class, as a cultural construct vis-à-vis help-seeking behavior. In doing so, the importance of connections emerged as a vital component of help-seeking behavior across all four waves of Haitian immigration. These connections were present in all facets of Haitian social structure, regardless of social class; although one's social class did influence the types of connections one could access. This study supported existing research on SES and help-seeking, that identified education, income and occupation as factors that impact knowledge and access to resources. However it expanded SES to include the cultural context and in doing so discovered the importance of social class and help-seeking as dependent on connections or social networking among Haitian immigrants.

### *Social Capital*

Connections or social networking is not uncommon among immigrant populations. Often defined in the context of social capital, as “the networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam, 1995, p.664), these connections or social networking among immigrant have not been as clearly defined. According to Potocky-Tripodi (2004) social capital has had several definition in the context of immigrant and refugee populations and these definitions consist of family ties, fictive kinships, co-ethnic support, ethnic organizations, and community organizations (Potocky-Tripodi, 2004).

However, existing studies on social networking or social capital in the context of immigrant help-seeking behaviors, is limited. Social capital and help-seeking behaviors of immigrants was examined in welfare use, access to resources, access to health and mental health care, occupational attainment and domestic violence (Bohon, 2005; Bui & Morash, 2007; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Lingxin & Yukio, 2001; Ryan, 2011), however in the context of Haitian immigrants, it was examined in the area of economic adaptation and adult education (Albertini, 2009; Potocky-Tripodi, 2004). Therefore, this study adds to existing studies on immigrant help-seeking behaviors and social capital by expounding upon the relevance of social networks on Haitian immigrants’ help-seeking behaviors in the United States.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The intent of qualitative research is to bring about a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. In the research environment, a more intimate connection is established with the participants. Although the participant sample size is small, the data collected elicits a

content that has breadth and depth (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative analysis requires the researcher to engage in field research. The researcher is present during the data collection process, and in the process of “being there” is able to identify the subtle nuances in the participants’ attitudes and behaviors (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Qualitative research process allows for flexibility and availability. As such the research design can be modified as information is gathered and analyzed and the researcher is prepared to engage in the field research whenever the opportunity presents itself (Rubin & Babbie, 2001).

However, there are some limitations to qualitative research in terms of subjectivity and generalizability. The qualitative researcher must guard against imposing personal feelings or biases as data is gathered and analyzed. Qualitative research requires the researcher to have a heightened sense of self-awareness, as to understand their own perspective and psychological and emotional state prior to, during and after the research experience (Creswell, 1998, Rubin & Babbie, 2001).

Qualitative analysis provides a forum in which the researcher obtains a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon based on very personal and at times intimate observations. In addition data is collected from a smaller sample pool. The richness of the data, the specificity of the study’s participants and context reduces the generalizability of the results (Babbie & Rubin, 2001).

The results of this study are applicable to the participants in this study. The inclusion criterion was very specific. Although participants’ characteristics from each wave of Haitian immigration were consistent with previous studies, it is possible that a different group of participants may have presented different characteristics which might

have yielded different results. In addition, at times, the research environment was compromised by day-to-day activities of the organization. As such this might have influenced participants' responsiveness, sense of privacy and anonymity.

Time was also a factor. Participants were particularly concerned with the focus group/ interview time-frame. In fact many participants voiced their concerns whenever the researcher mentioned the possible length of focus groups and individual interviews. At times the researcher made attempts to accommodate the participants' wishes while ensuring substantive data.

In terms of language, the researcher though fluent in understanding Creole did not speak Creole, and so at times relied on translators to convey the research questions. This could have influenced the level of comfort participants had in responding to the researcher. However, the researcher made attempts to guard against this by clarifying any questions presented by the translator and the participants either directly or via the translator and responding via the translator to responses in Creole, as to allow participants to know and see that the researcher understood them.

#### Considerations for Social Work Practice: Towards Cultural Competence

This study has important implications for cultural competence in social work practice with immigrant populations. Cultural competence encompasses practice skills that recognize immigrants' cultural orientation, immigrants' context of departure and arrival, and the impact and influence of immigration policies on immigrant resettlement

According to Lum's (1999), culturally competent practice model, cultural competence consists of cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development and inductive learning (Lum 2005). Cultural competence requires us to temper our individual

values and allow ourselves to “honor and respect the cultural collective values” within a larger context (Lum, 2005, p. 6). In addition, cultural competence reflects social patterns that encompass cultural value and social class, better known as *ethclass*. *Ethclass* recognizes the existence of both ethnic and social stratification in society.

In working with Haitian immigrants, an examination of cultural orientation and values and recognition of *ethclass* are important to cultural competent practice. Social work practitioners should be cognizant of their cultural orientation and it influences their perception and contact with Haitian immigrants. An important aspect of cultural competence for social work practitioners involves an awareness of diverse groups. This awareness takes place by close examination of the group’s demographic differences, strengths, challenges, culture and experiences with oppression. In working with Haitian immigrants, social work practitioners can develop effective practice skills by recognizing within group differences as reflected in periods of immigration, level of education, social class standing in Haiti, phenotypic characteristics, language acquisition, and regions of resettlement in the United States. Understanding these differences can ground social work practitioners in a new cultural understanding. As social work practitioners continue to seek a new cultural understanding, they can take this newfound knowledge and understanding and move into a more public forum. In doing so, they can help increase cultural competence among other social work practitioners and service providers.

As discussed in this research study Haitian immigrants were marginalized in both Haiti—depending on their social class standing— and in the United States — depending on their immigration status and context of arrival. In developing cultural competency with Haitian immigrants, social work practitioners gain a contextual

understanding of the immigration experience. This contextual understanding includes, Haitian immigrants' context of departure, the push and pull factors that influence Haitian immigrants' decision to leave Haiti, the transition phase and finally the context of arrival in the United States. Social work practitioners are encouraged to examine the political, economic, social, and cultural realities of immigrants arriving from less economically developed countries. Haiti is one such country.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas. According to the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) on health, education and income, Haiti is ranked 158 out of 187 countries with comparable data (UNDP, 2011). As the poorest country in the Americas, the implications on quality of life often result in limited access to education, social resources, increased risk of disease and early death, health disparities, political instability, and structural violence. These factors provide a context in which decisions to immigrate become significant, even inevitable. By incorporating this knowledge into social work practice, social work practitioners gain an advanced understanding of Haitian immigrants' orientation in the United States and can help them identify gaps in services that may impede Haitian immigrants' resettlement needs.

As previously stated most Haitian immigrants' decision to leave Haiti was the only logical and viable option in a climate of political instability and extreme poverty. For most Haitian immigrants their context of departure was a strong determinant of their immigration status upon arrival in the United States, i.e. refugees, asylee, undocumented, or documented immigrants. Knowledge of the existing conditions in the immigrants' country of origin and the link between existing conditions and immigration status

provides the basis for a greater understanding of immigrants' preparedness and ability to navigate resources in the United States.

Differences in immigration status and context of reception are important realities. A change in immigration status changes the immigrant's orientation in the United States. For example a change from undocumented to document allows for greater access to resources. As indicated in this study, participants were pleased with the Obama administration's decision to give Temporary Protective Status (TPS) to Haitian immigrants residing in the United States following the 2010 Haitian earthquake. The TPS status provided Haitians with a legal status and access to resources such as jobs and education that would have otherwise been unavailable.

It's important that social work practitioners familiarize themselves with immigration policies and their historical significance. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Haitian Interdiction Agreement had a negative impact on Haitian immigrants' ability to seek asylum in the United States. Many were summarily returned to Haiti in direct violation of the United Nations' Refugee Act, and many who remained in the United States were unable to access resources. Labeled economic migrants, they were not able to access resources intended for political refugees (Zucker & Zucker, 1996).

The label of economic refugee further supported the common belief in the United States that Haitian immigrants left their country to take advantage of U.S. resources. And in many ways this perception is often supported. Haitians arrive from a less economically developed country; have lived in the absence of stable governments, limited or absence of basic human needs and rights, limited access to education, and an inability to move out of their dire conditions. Many arrive in the United States in poverty.

This said, it should be stated that not all Haitian immigrants arrived in the United States under refugee status, many arrived as documented immigrants. Cultural competent practice requires social work practitioners to distinguish the many differences between immigrant and refugee populations. Immigrants leave their home country voluntarily, often the result of pull factors in the new host country, reunification with family, job opportunities and educational advancements. Whereas refugees often leave their home country under conditions of duress, the result of push factors, political instability, civil war, and famine. Refugees unlike immigrant populations do not plan their departure, and therefore many arrive in the new host country with little to no resources (Segal, 2002).

Although this study found that most Haitian immigrants left to improve their quality of life, not all left with the intention of remaining permanently in the United States. In fact, Haiti's political climate and the resulting social and economic outcomes, forced most Haitian immigrants to seek other means outside of Haiti to achieve educational and professional aspirations and attempt to improve their quality of life. Immigration was this viable option; however, it was not intended to be a permanent one, according to Haitian immigrants in this study, many anticipated a return to Haiti.

Haitian immigrants love Haiti, and under different conditions would return. This is important for social work practitioners to understand, as it is easy to overlook the fact that leaving Haiti was inevitable for many, or that the immigration experience to the United States was intended to be permanent, when it may not have been. Gaining a perspective on the immigrants' decision and context of departure plays a vital role in understanding immigrant help-seeking behaviors. For most Haitian immigrants, help-seeking in the context of low availability of resources was limited to non-existent.



Many participants in this study were unaware at the time of their arrival of government or social resources that could facilitate their transition even existed. Rather, most participants arrived in the United States with their cultural understanding of help-seeking behaviors, and this understanding was directly linked to connections, either family members or close family ties. Therefore, participants sought the assistance of these connections in the United States in their attempts to access resources.

Understanding immigrants' context of arrival also facilitates social work practice with immigrants. For first and second wave immigrants arrived at a time when foreign labor force was encouraged, immigration laws were not as stringent, and the Haitian immigrant population was small in numbers, often educated into a profession, knew French and had connections reflective of their social class standing. Most did not seek resources from government or social service agencies. However, Haitian immigrants from latter waves were subject to changes immigration policies, intense racism and discrimination, language barriers, familiarity with host culture, lack of education and employable skills and the stigma of AIDS and voodoo. These factors had a direct impact on their help-seeking behavior. Many Haitians, due to immigration policies and tenuous immigration status, sought support and accessed resources within their immediate environment, family members and close friends and eventually a Haitian enclave. They intentionally remained outside the radar of government sponsored programs and resources for fear of deportation and distrust of government entities. As well, they were often labeled economic refugees, and therefore could not access U.S. resettlement services.

Cultural competent practice with Haitian immigrants requires that social workers consider pervasive issues of trust, Haitian social structure, language barriers, and stigmas associated with Haitian immigrants, AIDS carriers and Voodoo worshippers. Many Haitian immigrants arrive in the United States having experienced traumas, extreme poverty, and political instability. They have distrust of government entities; and for many Haitian immigrants, their tenuous immigration status results in fear of deportation or summarily return to Haiti. Social work practitioners may address these factors by demonstrating a genuine interest in understanding Haitian immigrants' experiences within Haitian culture and social structure.

The Haitian social structure is important in understanding Haitian immigrants' orientation in the United States. It is sometimes easy to assume that ethnic and immigrant ethnic groups are homogenous, when there are clear and distinguishing characteristics that separate members within an ethnic group population. For Haitian immigrants these distinguishing characteristics, as evidenced in this study, were revealed by phenotypic differences, education level, language proficiency, residential background, occupation and income. As such, cultural competent practice requires an understanding of these factors, sometimes subtle in working with Haitian immigrants.

This study revealed that despite differences in social class standing, Haitian immigrants utilized established behaviors that were reflective of Haitian culture, namely the use of a connection to initiate help-seeking behaviors. Although social class did not eliminate this cultural behavior in the United States, it did influence the types of connection, and the power and influence these connections had in assisting Haitian immigrants navigate resources in the United States. This is important in understanding

Haitian culture and Haiti's social, economic and political influence and impact on help-seeking behaviors. In addition, Haitian culture is reflective of systemic distrust towards both government entities—which according to study participants have done little in Haiti to improve Haitians overall quality of life—and towards each other, as they compete for resources. As such their help-seeking behaviors are conflicted.

For first and second wave participants, who arrived prior or immediately following the 1965 immigration laws were welcomed in the United States, as they were needed foreign labor, in a time of war. However, this was not the case for latter wave immigrants, most of whom were considered economic refugees and under the immigration policy of interdiction, were summarily returned to Haiti. Most of the Haitian immigrants, who remained, were undocumented and therefore disentitled to most resources available to political refugees, like Cubans who arrived under the Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA) of 1966 and during the Port of Mariel boatlift in 1980.

Understanding immigration policies and immigrant policies in the context of social work practice is relevant, as these policies not only change, but affect immigrant populations in all facets of their lives including living conditions, economic power, and orientation to their new environment, willingness to access resources, migration patterns, and child welfare. For most participants in this study there was a clear sense of differential treatment between themselves and Spanish-speaking immigrants. Latter wave participants lamented the absence of Creole speaking personnel, the heightened sensitivity of services providers to Spanish speaking immigrants, negative perceptions of Haitian immigrants as carriers of the AIDS virus, dirty and illiterate. In addition their status as undocumented immigrants or economic refugees created a U.S. climate of

reception that was unwelcoming. Haitian immigrants were treated as an unwelcomed immigrant population (Zucker & Zucker, 1986).

In sum as social work practitioners develop culturally competent skills with Haitian immigrants, they should be cognizant of the following factors:

- Haitian immigrants are not a homogenous group. There may be dissonance among Haitian immigrants due to differences in political views, occupation, comportment, language and education.
- Many Haitian immigrants arrived with a documented status, although the largest wave of Haitian immigrants consisted of a disproportionate number of refugees. This fact may provide insight as to immigrant's pre-immigration status and experience.
- Haitian immigrants seek initial support from other Haitian immigrants, and mirror cultural behaviors found in a country where formal, legal, and political established policies are not consistently adhered to, often circumvented through a channel of personal connections within government institutions. Therefore resistance to resources, may not necessarily be resistance, but cultural patterns of help-seeking in the absent of available resources.
- Haitian immigrants are private and prideful, and therefore often do not openly discuss personal matters with outside entities. Therefore it is important to build a genuine and consistent rapport, and follow through with services offered.
- Haitian immigrants are very sensitive to the depiction of Haiti, and Haitians in general and may easily feel insulted by comments made about Haiti's political,

economic and social conditions. Social work practitioners should be mindful of this fact whenever discussing Haiti's culture and current condition.

- Haitian immigrants do not navigate well on issues of racism as a reality in Haiti, although they are keenly aware of it in the United States. They tend to view otherness in the context of social class, residential background, and level of education.
- Haitian immigrants build rapport and trust through consistency and follow through. Taking this into account, social work practitioners establish a trusting relationship.
- Haitian immigrants believe what will be will be, and are often perceived as having a fatalistic perspective on life. Therefore Haitian immigrants may not respond with as much emotional affect as expected in difficult and traumatic situations.
- Haitian immigrants are resilient and faithful; they have lived in the most desperate conditions, and still remain thankful to God, as they move forward in their own lives. God and religion are central to their lives.
- Haitian immigrants maintain strong ties to Haitian culture, therefore in working with Haitian immigrants it is important to understand how Haitian culture impacts Haitian immigrants daily life, decision making and future orientation.

#### Future Research

The findings of this study suggest further research in several areas. One area is help-seeking behavior on immigrants arriving from less economically developed countries with a closer examination at the importance of having a connection in both country of origin and host country and its impact on quality of life. This connection is a

cultural reality, and which seems to have a much stronger impact in the lives of Haitians, than written policies or laws, particularly in Haiti, where much is conducted via a connection. A study in Haiti, on access to resources, and the significance of personal connections might shed greater light not only on help-seeking behaviors, but in a larger context, Haitians beliefs on democracy, and democratic processes in an established system of connections.

Future research might also involve a comparative study of the immigration experiences of Haitian immigrants in the United States vs. Haitian immigrants in Canada, given that large numbers of Haitians immigrated and continue to immigrate to Canada. This study might shed greater insight into differences in their help-seeking behavior, given that language barrier was not as prominent an issue in Canada and the context of arrival in Canada was probably much different than that in the United States.

In the context of cultural patterns, religion is prominent in Haitian culture, and yet it did not emerge as a prominent theme in this study. Several participants talked about prayer, and their established belief in God, however the focus of help-seeking remained within the network of personal connections. It is quite possible that religiosity was understood to be omnipresent and therefore not necessarily highlighted as factor in the help-seeking behavior of Haitian immigrants. In this context, future research might involve gaining a more in depth perspective on Haitian immigrants' religiosity in the context of help-seeking.

In addition, further studies on Haitian communities and the divisions that persist would provide a more in-depth understanding of Haitian social structure in the United

States, the factors that maintain these divisions, real and imagined, and how this may play out with the future waves of Haitian immigration to the United States.

In this study, I found that generational differences among participants played a key role in maintaining these divisions. The realities of first and some second wave participants were vastly different in terms of their context of departure and arrival, and therefore to expect a strong connection between the first and second wave participants and latter wave participants could present Haitians in a negative light and perpetuate divisions that were in many ways the result of differences in immigration periods, social class standing, and location. The latter wave Haitian immigrants arrived in Miami, whereas immigrants from the first and second wave established themselves in New York or Boston.

This study found that there was a strong sense of giving back to the Haitian community in the United States and in Haiti. First and Second wave Haitian immigrants did so by teaching new immigrants, advocating for services and legal protection, whereas third and fourth wave Haitian immigrants worked within Haitian communities to offer services in an atmosphere that facilitated Haitian immigrants access to needed resources, such as job training, education and social services. Therefore, future research in perceptions of giving back from the perspective of first and second wave immigrants would provide greater insight as to the on-going perception that first and second wave Haitian immigrants were far removed from the realities Haitians immigrants from the latter waves.

## Summary

This study was based on a qualitative grounded theory research design. The participants represented each of the four largest waves of Haitian immigration to the United States during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The results of this study were grounded in data, and gave way to six core thematic categories and lead to an emerging theory of help-seeking behavior based on having social connections. The study also revealed that social class's impact on help-seeking is linked to the type of connections Haitian immigrants have, in terms of their income, their influence, their power and their access to other connections.

In addition, this study showed that to understand the immigration process or experience we must recognize the impact of historical context. Haitian immigrants' arrival during the first two waves occurred in a more welcoming context, at a time when U.S. government sought foreign labor. In contrast Haitian immigrants from the latter two waves arrived in less economically thriving times, unexpectedly and the United States was not prepared and not willing to absorb them into U.S. society.

Overall the results indicated that participants have a strong Haitian identity and connection to Haiti. They are resourceful and supportive of one another, despite issues of trust and generational differences. This study also revealed that social class did influence help-seeking behavior but in more complex ways than previously understood.

Participants who arrived with strong educational foundation were better prepared to navigate resources in the United States. Higher levels of education among participants were linked to a higher social standing or a change in social standing, which provided participants with better job opportunities in Haiti and subsequently in the United States. For first and second wave participants, this meant access to better job opportunities,



neighborhoods, and education. Many participants in the latter waves, despite also having connections experienced a downward pattern of assimilation, poorer labor markets, neighborhoods and educational opportunities.

Since the first wave of Haitian immigration the Haitian community has progressed significantly in major areas of the country, namely New York, Boston and Miami. Haitian immigrants created ethnic enclaves, developed programs to better serve Haitian immigrants, entered political arenas, and despite immigration policies, language barriers, context of departure and arrival, racism and discrimination, participants regardless of their wave of immigration remain advocates for Haitians, Haitian culture and Haiti.

## Appendices

### APPENDIX A

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

##### **Examining Social Class and Help-Seeking Behavior among Haitian Immigrants in the United States**

You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Martine Pierre-Pierre, MSW, LCSW a Doctoral Candidate at the University Of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. Martine Pierre-Pierre may be reached via email at [pierream@aol.com](mailto:pierream@aol.com) or by phone at 912. 272.4525 Or the dissertation chair, Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla, Ph.D. at 512. 471.6266.

The results of this study will contribute to Martine Pierre-Pierre's doctoral paper. You were selected for this specific research study because you are of Haitian descent and you immigrated to the United States between 1960 and 1995.

This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not you want to participate in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without any negative consequences or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose not to participate in this study it will not affect your current or future relationships with the University of Texas-Austin, Miami-Dade Board of Education or Haitian Women of Miami organization. Please let the researcher know if you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this agreement for your records.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to look at how your life in Haiti affected your ability to seek help in the United States during your times of need. You will be part of a study involving approximately 50 Haitian immigrants, men and women.

## **PROCEDURES**

If you decide to participate in this study you will be asked to:

- Answer specific questions
- Participate in a group meeting or face-to-face interview

## **TIME**

Your participation time will last anywhere from 1-4 hours. For the purpose of this study, you will be asked to select a fake name instead of your real name. You will be asked to sign a paper telling us that you are willing to participate in this study. You will also be asked to answer questions in a group setting or one on one meeting.

### ***Interview Structure***

You will be given the choice to either attend a group meeting or participate in a one on one interview. There will be four (4) group meetings, each representing a time period when a large number of Haitians immigrated to the United States. If you choose to participate in a group meeting, you will be assigned to a group based on your date of arrival to the United States. The groups may last from 2 to 4 hours. They will be conducted in English, French or Creole. The group meetings will take place at a local Miami-Dade school or at the Haitian Women of Miami organization.

Prior to the group meeting you will be asked to complete some specific questions about your immigration experience and provide some specific information about your

experiences in Haiti and the United States. You will not be asked about your immigration status and this will be clearly stated before the group meeting. During the group meeting you will be asked to talk about your experiences in seeking resources in Haiti (medical, housing, food, education) and your experiences in seeking resources (medical, housing, food, education) in the United States. Additional questions will be asked according to your answer(s). The group meetings will be audio taped and then written out word for word. Those tapes will be later destroyed when the study is complete.

If you choose to complete a one on one interview, you will be asked to complete some specific questions about your immigration experience and provide some specific information about your experiences in Haiti and the United States. You will not be asked about your immigration status and this will be clearly stated before the start of the interview. The interview will take place at a location of your choice (home, school, or Haitian Women of Miami organization). The interview may last from 1- 2 hours. During the interview you will be asked to talk about your experiences in seeking resources in Haiti (medical, housing, food, education) and your experiences in seeking resources (medical, housing, food, education) in the United States. The interview will be conducted in English, French or Creole. The interview will be audio taped and then written out word for word. Those tapes will be later destroyed when the study is complete.

During the group meeting and/or face to face interview you will be asked to elaborate on your experience (s) in seeking resources in Haiti during times of need. You will also be asked to talk about what may have helped you to get what you needed and kept you from getting what you needed. In addition, you will be asked to discuss your experience (s) in

seeking resources in the United States and to identify how your experience (s) in Haiti may have influenced the way you try and obtain services in the United States.

The researcher is fluent in French and English and has limited knowledge of Creole; therefore a Creole speaking translator will be present during the group meetings and one on one interviews to ensure that you understand the questions and that your answers are clearly understood by the researcher.

The researcher will likely use some of your direct answers from the tapes in a final report and any publication of the material. As a participant you may review any of the direct answers taken from the tape of my interview with you or in the group meeting. If a direct answer is used in the publication, it will not be specifically attributed to any named individual as the privacy of all participants will be protected.

The information that I gather in the group meeting (s) /interview will be appear in my doctoral paper.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no anticipated risks associated with this study, except for the possibility that some participants might experience some discomforts if they think that their immigration status may be revealed during the course of the study. You have the right not to respond to questions or change your mind and remove yourself from the study at anytime without negative consequences. If at any time you are uncomfortable with what is being said or what you may have shared and feel you need some reassurance/ support, you will be referred to the nearest medical facility. However you will be responsible for paying any costs associated with the services you receive according to the medical facility's payment scale.

## **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR SOCIETY**

Your participation in this study will help increase the field of social work's knowledge and understanding of Haitian culture and, more specifically, Haitian immigrants' experiences in the United States. The information obtained in this study will assist social workers and the agencies that hire them to better understand and serve your needs and the needs of the Haitian community in the United States. Furthermore, it will contribute to the limited knowledge of Haitian immigrants and their experiences in accessing supportive resources in the United States.

## **COMPENSATION/COSTS**

If you stay for the entire time of the group meeting and/or interview you will receive a ten dollar (\$10) Walmart gift certificate for every hour you spend in the group meeting and/or interview.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY PROTECTIONS**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that may identify you as a participant in this study will remain private. This information will only be shared with your permission or as required by law. Your privacy will be maintained through the use of fake names. Real names will not be used.

All data and information you provide for the purpose of this study will remain private. The group meeting and interviews will be recorded for research purposes only. The audiotapes will be coded so that your personal information is protected. The information on the audio tapes will only be heard by the researcher and an identified Creole translator(s). The written documents will not contain any real names neither yours nor anyone you mention during the group meeting/ interview sessions. Therefore it will be

impossible to identify you from the documents that will be made public. The recordings and written documents will be destroyed once the research is completed. All information provided will be kept in a locked and secure location. The information entered on the computer will be saved to a separate disk. The researcher will have access to this information as well as the dissertation chair, Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla, Professor of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin. Once the research is complete, all forms will be destroyed.

All participants will be informed of the following:

- Group meeting and Interviews will be audio taped
- Immigration status will not be discussed during the group meeting and/or interviews
- Tapes will be coded so that no personal information is visible on them;
- Tapes will be kept in a secure place (e.g., a locked file cabinet in the investigator's office);
- Tapes will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator and Creole translator (s)
- Tapes will be erased after they are written out and coded.

## **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation in this study is your choice and your choice only. If you volunteer to be part of this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. You may refuse to answer certain questions and still remain in the study. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you will still receive the Wal-mart gift certificate.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact the main researcher Martine Pierre-Pierre, MSW, LCSW at [pierream@aol.com](mailto:pierream@aol.com) or 912. 272.4525 or the dissertation chair, Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla, Ph.D. at [ypadilla@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ypadilla@austin.utexas.edu) or 512. 471.6266.

## **CONTACT AND QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page and under the identification of investigators. If you would like to obtain information about the research study, have questions, concerns, complaints or wish to discuss problems about a research study with someone outside of the study, please contact the IRB Office at (512) 471-8871 or Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685. Anonymity, if desired, will be protected to the extent possible. In addition an email may also be sent to [orisc@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:orisc@uts.cc.utexas.edu) or a letter sent to IRB Administrator, P.O. Box 7426, Mail Code A 3200, Austin, TX 78713.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

## **SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions described above. I am aware that my participation in this research study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to participate in it. I understand the information in this form and I agree that all my questions have been answered and that I have been given enough time to make a decision. I understand that I may stop my participation at any time without negative



consequences. Finally, I have been informed that my participation will be kept private through the use of fake names.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher

## **APPENDIX B**

### **CONSENTEMENT-PARTICIPATION A UNE RECHERCHE DOCTORALE**

#### **Une étude du concept de classe sociale et de l'effet de classe sociale sur la demande services sociaux chez les Immigrants d'origine haïtienne aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique**

Vous avez été choisi(e) pour participer a un travail de recherche mène par Martine Pierre-Pierre, MSW, LCSW, candidate au Doctorat a l'Université du Texas a Austin L'Ecole de Service social, Austin, Texas, USA. Les résultats de cette étude contribueront a la thèse de doctorat de Mme Pierre-Pierre, qui vous a spécifiquement choisi(e) car vous êtes d'origine Haïtienne et vous avez émigré(e) aux Etats Unis d'Amérique entre les années 1960 et 1995. On peut rejoindre Martine Pierre-Pierre via courriel a [pierream@aol.com](mailto:pierream@aol.com) ou par appel téléphonique au 912. 272.4525, ou la Présidente du Comite de recherche, le Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla au 512. 471.6266.

Le formulaire qui suit vous renseignera sur cette étude. La responsable de l'étude vous décrira les buts de l'étude et répondra à toutes vos questions. Lisez attentivement les renseignements suivants et cherchez à obtenir toute clarification nécessaire avant de décider si oui ou non vous désirez participer à cette recherche. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire. Vous pouvez refuser de participer ou terminer votre participation en tout temps, avec aucun effet ou suite negatif, ou perte de bénéfice auquel vous auriez droit. Si vous choisissez de ne pas y participer votre décision n'affectera aucunement vos relations actuelles ou à venir avec l'Universite du Texas-Austin, le Conseil Scolaire de Miami-Dade, ou l'Association des Femmes Haïtiennes de Miami. Si cela s'avère nécessaire, vous n'aurez qu'à aviser la chercheure que vous désirez interrompre votre participation. Vous obtiendrez alors votre copie de votre consentement pour vos dossiers.

## **BUT DE L'ETUDE**

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner comment votre jeunesse en Haïti a influencée votre capacité de trouver de l'aide aux Etats Unis une fois arrivée sur le territoire Américain quand vous en aviez peut-être le plus besoin. En acceptant, vous participerez donc a une étude qualitative impliquant environs 50 immigrants, hommes et femmes, d'origine Haïtienne .

## **PROCEDURES**

Si vous choisissez de participer à cette étude on vous demandera:

- On vous demandera de répondre à certaines questions
- On vous demandera de participer à des groupes de discussions ou a des entrevues individuelles

## **DUREE**

Votre participation durera environ de 1 à 4 heures. Pour ce qui en est de l'étude, on vous demandera de choisir un nom autre que le votre et de signer une feuille de consentement indiquant votre libre choix de participer à l'enquête. On vous demandera aussi de répondre à certaines questions dans une réunion de groupe ou dans une entrevue particulière.

### ***Structure des entrevues***

On vous accordera le choix d'assister à une réunion de groupe ou de participer dans une ou plusieurs entrevues. En tout, il y aura quatre (4) rencontres de groupes, chacune d'elle représentant une époque quand un grand nombre d'Haitiens immigrèrent aux Etats Unis. Si votre choix est d'assister a des réunions de groupes, vous serez assigne(e) a l'un des groupes selon votre date d'arrivée aux Etats Unis. Ces réunions de groupe pourront durer

de 2 à 4 heures. Elles seront menées en Anglais, en Français ou en Créole. Les réunions de groupes auront lieu dans une école locale du Conseil Scolaire de Miami-Dade ou dans les locaux de l'organisation des femmes Haïtiennes de Miami. Les réunions de groupes seront précédées par l'administration d'un questionnaire sur votre expérience d'immigration personnelle et on vous posera des questions spécifiques au sujet de vos expériences antérieures en Haïti et aux Etats-Unis. Vous ne serez pas questionné au sujet de votre statut en tant qu'immigrant et ceci sera clairement expliqué au début de la session. Pendant la réunion on vous demandera de vous exprimer sur vos expériences vécues quand vous cherchiez de l'aide en Haïti avant d'immigrer aux Etats Unis (médicale, logement, éducation, nutrition) et aux Etats Unis une fois sur le territoire Américain. Il se peut que vous ayez à répondre à quelques questions supplémentaires pour clarifier vos réponses. Les discussions de groupe seront enregistrées sur bandes.

Si vous choisissez de participer à une entrevue particulière, on vous demandera de remplir un questionnaire sur votre expérience d'immigration et de fournir certaines explications sur vos expériences préalables en Haïti et après votre immigration aux Etats Unis. Encore une fois on ne vous questionnera pas sur votre statut d'immigrant et ceci sera clairement dit au début de l'entrevue. L'entrevue aura lieu à un endroit de votre choix (à la maison, à l'école, ou dans les locaux de l'Association des Femmes Haïtiennes de Miami. L'entrevue pourra durer 2 heures. Elle comprendra des questions sur vos expériences antérieures de recherche d'aide en Haïti (médicale, logement, scolaire et nutrition) ainsi que vos expériences similaires aux Etats-Unis. Ces entrevues seront menées en Anglais, en Français ou en Créole. Les entrevues seront enregistrées sur bandes magnétiques, copiées mot-a-mot et les bandes sonores détruites une fois l'étude

terminée. La chercheuse est bilingue parlant bien le français et l'anglais mais sa connaissance du Créole est limitée: ainsi un traducteur parlant Créole sera présent durant les réunions de groupe et les entrevues pour assurer que les questions soient bien comprises par vous ainsi que les réponses par la chercheuse. La chercheuse pourra inclure dans son rapport final ainsi que des publications qui ressortiront de cette recherche certaines réponses telles qu'exprimées lors des discussions ou entrevues. En tant que participant vous aurez le loisir de revoir toute réponse que vous aurez fournie sur bande sonore. Aucune réponse ne sera directement attribuable à un individu particulier pour protéger l'identité de tous. Les renseignements de la chercheuse auraient rassemblés dans les discussions de groupe ou durant les entrevues, seront résumés et paraîtront dans sa thèse de doctorat.

### **RISQUES POTENTIELS ET DE SENSATIONS D'INCONFORTS**

Il n'y a aucun risque à votre santé ou bien-être associé à cette étude, sauf si vous croyez que votre statut d'immigrant pourrait être révélé au cours de l'enquête. Vous avez le droit de refuser de répondre aux questions ou de vous retirer de l'étude à tout moment avec aucune conséquence négative pour vous. Si à aucun moment vous ressentez un malaise durant la discussion ou à la suite de ce que vous auriez dit ou ce que vous auriez partagé et croyez que vous avez besoin d'un support quelconque, vous serez référé immédiatement au centre de santé le plus proche. Toutefois vous aurez à défrayer les coûts associés aux services que vous recevrez selon l'échelle des coûts du service de santé.

## **BIENFAITS POTENTIELS AUX PARTICIPANTS ET/OU A LA SOCIETE HAITIENNE EN GENERAL**

Votre participation a cette étude aidera à améliorer les connaissances et la compréhension qu'ont les travailleurs sociaux de la culture Haïtienne et plus spécifiquement des expériences vécues des immigrants Haïtiens aux Etats Unis d'Amérique. Les informations recueillies dans cette étude aideront les travailleurs sociaux et les agences qui les emploient a mieux comprendre et mieux servir vos besoins ainsi que ceux de la communauté Haïtienne aux Etats Unis d'Amérique. En plus, il est à espérer que les témoignages recueillis contribueront à enrichir les connaissances limitées sur les immigrants Haïtiens et leurs expériences lorsque qu'ils font appel aux services sociaux aux Etats Unis d'Amérique

## **COMPENSATION/COUTS**

Tous ceux qui participent pour la durée entière des réunions de leur groupe ou pour leur entrevue particulière seront attribues un certificat-cadeau Wal-Mart d'une valeur de (20USD) dix dollars US par heure de participation.

## **CONFIDENTIALITE ET PROTECTION DE LA VIE PRIVEE**

Tout renseignement qui pourrait vous identifier en tant que participant à cette etude demeurera confidentiel. Ces informations ne seront partagées qu'avec votre consentement ou si la loi le requiert. Votre droit a la vie privée sera protégé par l'usage de prête-nom. Vos vrais noms et identites ne seront pas employes.

Les données et les renseignements que vous fournirez aux fins de cette étude demeureront dans le domain eprive. Les discussions de groupe et les entrevues ne seront enregistrées que pour les besoins de la recherche. Les bandes sonores seront codées afin

d'éviter le dévoilement des identifications personnelles. Ces enregistrements ne seront entendus que par la chercheuse et son traducteur Créole attitré. Les documents écrits des bandes sonores n'incluront aucun nom vérifiable, ni le votre ni celui de toute personne dont mention est faite durant les discussions de groupes ou les entrevues. Donc, il demeurera impossible à quiconque de vous identifier d'après les documents qui deviendront publics éventuellement. Une fois la recherche complétée, Les enregistrements, les bandes sonores et les documents écrits les bandes sonores seront détruites. Tous les renseignements fournis seront maintenus sous clé, dans un lieu sûr. Les informations inscrites dans les ordinateurs seront protégées sur des diskettes séparées. La chercheuse et le Président du comité de recherche, le Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla, Professeure à l'Ecole de Service social de l'Université de Texas à Austin, seules, auront accès à ces informations. Une fois la recherche terminée, tous les formulaires qui auront servi à l'étude seront détruits.

Tous les participants seront informés des étapes suivantes:

- Le statut d'immigrant ne fera pas partie des discussions de groupe ou des entrevues
- Les entrevues et les sessions seront enregistrées sur bandes sonores;
- Les bandes sonores ou magnétiques seront codées de façon que qu'aucun identificateur personnel n'y paraisse;
- Les bandes sonores ou magnétiques seront gardées sous clé en lieu sûr (ex. un classeur fermé à clé dans le bureau de l'enquêteur principal):
- Les bandes sonores ou magnétiques ne seront entendues ou vues que par la chercheuse et les (s) traducteurs Créole (s)

- Les bandes sonores ou magnétiques seront effacées une fois les données codées et transcrites soient copier mot à mot

## **PARTICIPATION ET DESISTEMENT**

Votre participation à cette étude est un choix libre et uniquement votre choix. Si vous acceptez de faire partie de cette recherche, vous pourrez désister à tout moment sans aucune conséquence. Vous pouvez refuser de répondre à certaines questions et toujours continuer à participer à l'étude. Si vous décidez de vous retirer de l'étude vous demeurerez toujours éligible pour le certificat-cadeau Wal-mart selon le temps que vous aurez passé à l'étude.

## **IDENTIFICATION DES CHERCHEURS**

Si vous avez des questions ou des inquiétudes concernant cette recherche, il ne s'agit pour vous que de contacter la chercheuse principale Martine Pierre-Pierre, MSW, LCSW, à [pierream@aol.com](mailto:pierream@aol.com) ou au numéro de téléphone suivant 912.272.4525 ou la Présidente du Comité de Recherche, Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla, Ph.D. à [ypadilla@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ypadilla@austin.utexas.edu) ou au numéro de téléphone 512.471.6266.

## **CONTACT ET QUESTIONS**

Si vous avez des questions au sujet de cette enquête posez les maintenant. Si plus tard vous avez d'autres questions, si vous désirez des renseignements supplémentaires, ou désirez vous retirer, il ne s'agit que de faire appel aux chercheurs menant cette enquête. Leurs noms, numéros de téléphone, et adresses électroniques paraissent au haut de cette page et sous la rubrique Identification des Chercheurs. Si par contre, vous désirez obtenir d'autres renseignements au sujet de l'étude, si vous avez des questions, des soucis, troubles ou plaintes ou si vous désirez discuter de problèmes associés à cette enquête



avec une personne non affiliée à cette étude, on vous demanderait de bien vouloir communiquer avec le Bureau IRB au (512) 471-8871 ou avec Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Présidente, Université de Texas à Austin, Comité d'Examen Institutionnel pour la Protection des Sujets d'Enquête, au (512) 232-268. Votre identité, si vous le désirez, demeurera anonyme et protégée. Une autre option sera d'expédier un courriel [aorisc@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:aorisc@uts.cc.utexas.edu) ou une correspondance adressée à l'Administrateur IRB, P.O. Box 7426, Mail Code A 3200, Austin, Tx 78713. Vous recevrez une copie de ces renseignements pour vos dossiers.

**SIGNATURE DU /DE LA PARTICIPANT(E)**

Je m'engage à participer à cette étude suivants les termes de l'enquête énoncés ci-dessus. Je reconnais que ma participation à cette étude est entièrement volontaire et que je suis libre d'y participer. Je comprends les explications qui m'ont été fournies et je certifie que toutes mes questions ont été répondues à mon entière satisfaction et que j'ai eu suffisamment de temps de réflexion avant de donner mon consentement. Je comprends également que je suis libre de me retirer à tout moment sans conséquence négative. Finalement j'ai été informé(e) que ma participation à cette enquête demeurera protégée par l'usage de pseudonymes

Signature de Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature de la Personne Obtenant le Consentement

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature de la Chercheuse

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Demographic Questionnaire**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: M\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_

#### **IMMIGRATION BACKGROUND**

1. When did you leave Haiti?

- 1950-1960
- 1961-1970
- 1971-1980
- 1981-1990
- 1990-present

2. Your decision to leave Haiti was based on:

- Education
- Employment
- Seeking a better life opportunity
- Reunification with family member
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

3. When did you arrive in the United States?

- 1950-1960
- 1961-1970
- 1971-1980
- 1981-1990

- 1990-present

4. How did you arrive in the United States?

- Plane
- Boat
- Car/Bus

5. Were you sponsored by a family member? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ if you answered yes, who sponsored you? Please circle all that apply.

- Father
- Mother
- Brother
- Sister
- Other family member\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you arrive from

- Haiti
- Canada
- France
- Africa, please specify\_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please specify\_\_\_\_\_

7. How old were you when you arrived in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

8. At the time of your arrival in the United States were you ( please circle your answer)

- Single

- engaged
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

9. At the time of your arrival in the United States did you have children? Yes\_\_

No\_\_

10. If you answered yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_ and how old were your children? \_\_\_\_\_

11. At the time of your arrival to the United States, what city did you live in

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you still live in the same city? Yes\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

13. Did you live with other people? Yes\_\_ No\_\_ if you answered yes who did you live with? ( please circle all that apply)

- Husband
- Wife
- Boyfriend
- Girlfriend
- Children
- Extended Family

14. How would you describe your initial community of residence ( please circle your answer):

- City Neighborhood
- Rural Area
- Single family homes
- Apartments
- Other ( please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

15. How would you describe the ethnic make-up of your community ( please circle your answer):

- Predominantly African American
- Predominantly White American
- Predominantly Haitian
- Other ( please list)\_\_\_\_\_

### **CURRENT STATUS**

1. Who currently lives in your house? ( please circle all that apply)

- Only you
- Husband
- Wife
- Boyfriend
- Girlfriend
- Children

- Extended Family members

2. How would you describe your community of residence ( please circle your answer):

- City Neighborhood
- Rural Area
- Single family homes
- Apartments
- Other ( please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

3. How would you describe the ethnic make-up of your community ( please circle your answer):

- Predominantly African American
- Predominantly White American
- Predominantly Haitian
- Other ( please list)\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you practice a religion? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, which one (please circle your answer)?

- Catholic
- Christian
- Jewish
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you work in the United States? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, what do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you work in the United States? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

If yes, what did you do? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your annual income in U.S. dollars ( please circle your answer)?

- Less than 10,0000
- 10,001-15,999
- 16,000- 20,999
- 21,000-25,999
- 26,00 -30,999
- 31,000- 35,999
- 40,000-45,999
- 50,000 +

7. What is your preferred language of communication in your home in the United States (please circle your answer)?

- Creole only
- French only
- Creole and French ( more French)

- French and Creole ( more Creole)
- Creole and Spanish
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

## **BACKGROUND IN HAITI**

1. Growing up in Haiti, did you live in a ( please circle your answer)

- City
- Town
- Township
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

2. Growing up in Haiti, what was the preferred language of communication in your home (please circle your answer)?

- Creole only
- French only
- Creole and French ( more French)
- French and Creole ( more Creole)
- Creole and Spanish ( more Spanish)
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

3. What was your preferred language of communication (please circle your answer)?

- Creole only
- French only



- Creole and French ( more French)
- French and Creole ( more Creole)
- Creole and Spanish ( more Spanish)
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you attend school in Haiti? Yes\_\_\_No \_\_\_\_

If so, please indicate the highest level you completed (please circle your answer)?

- Primary
- Secondary
- Rheto-Philo
- Normal Superior School
- University
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

5. Were you taught in ( please circle all that apply):

- Creole
- French
- Spanish
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you work outside of your home in Haiti? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

7. If you answered yes, what did you do?\_\_\_\_\_

8. Did you earn money for your work? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Questionnaire démographique**

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Genre \_\_\_\_ Homme \_\_\_\_\_ Femme \_\_\_\_\_

### **VOTRE VIE DEPUIS QUE VOUS ETES AUX ETATS UNIS D'AMERIQUE**

1 Quand avez-vous quitté Haïti? (encerclez votre réponse)

- 1950-1960
- 1961-1970
- 1971-1980
- 1981-1990
- 1990-a nos jours

2- Quelles sont les raisons qui vous ont poussé (e) à quitter Haïti pour venir aux Etats-Unis ? (Encerclez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent)

- Education
- Emploi
- La recherche d'une meilleure vie
- Réunification avec les membres de la famille
- Autres \_\_\_\_\_

3.- Quand êtes-vous arrivé(e) aux Etats-Unis? (encerclez votre réponse)

- 1950-1960
- 1961-1970
- 1971-1980

- 1981-1990
- 1990-a nos jours

4.-Comment êtes-vous arrive(e)\_ aux Etats-Unis? (encerclez votre réponse)

- Par avion
- Par bateau
- Par voiture ou autocar

5.-Avez-vous été parraine(e) par un membre de votre famille ? oui\_\_\_non\_\_\_

6.-Si oui, qui dans votre famille vous a parraine(e)? (encerclez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent)

- Votre pere
- Votre mere
- Votre frere(s)
- Votre soeur(s)

Un autre membre de votre famille, si oui, le ou laquelle \_\_\_\_\_

7.-Vous êtes arrive(e) directement (encerclez votre réponse)

- D'Haiti
- Du Canada
- De la France
- De l'Afrique, si oui de quel partie \_\_\_\_\_
- Autres, si oui, pourriez-vous fournir plus de détails \_\_\_\_\_

8.- A quel âge êtes-vous arrive(e) aux Etats Unis? \_\_\_\_\_

9.- Quand vous êtes arrive(e) aux Etats Unis, étiez-vous (encerclez la réponse qui s'applique a vous)

- Celibataire
- Fiance(e)
- Marie(e)
- Divorce(e)
- Veuf ou veuve

10.- Quand vous êtes arrive(e) aux Etats Unis, aviez-vous des enfants? Oui\_\_ Non\_\_

11.- Si oui, combien? \_\_\_\_\_ et quel âge avaient vos enfants? \_\_\_\_\_

12.- Quand vous êtes arrive(e) aux Etats Unis dans quelle ville habitez-vous?

\_\_\_\_\_

13.-Avez-vous toujours habite la même ville? Oui\_\_ Non\_\_

14.-Habitez-vous avec d'autres personnes? Oui\_\_ Non\_\_ si oui, avec qui habitez-vous? (encerclez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent a vous)

- Mari
- Femme
- Ami
- Amie
- Enfant
- Autre membre de votre famille

15.- Décrivez votre premier lieu de résidence (n'encerclez qu'un choix)

- Ville, ou quartier communautaire
- Zone rurale
- Maison unifamiliale
- Appartement
- Autres ( donnez des details)\_\_\_\_\_

16.-Comment deciriez-vous l'ensemble ethnique de votre communauté (n'encerclez qu'un choix)

- A predominance afro-americaïn
- A predominance blanc-americaïn
- A predominance d'origine haitienne
- Autre (indiquez les origines ethniques)\_\_\_\_\_)

### **VOTRE VIE ACTUELLE AUX ETAT UNIS D'AMERIQUE**

17.- Actuellement qui habite avec vous dans votre résidence? (encerclez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent)

- Vous habitez seul(e)
- Avec votre mari
- Avec votre femme
- Avec votre petit ami
- Avec une amie de fille
- Avec vos enfants, ou les enfants des autres
- Avec d'autres membres de votre famille

18.-Décrivez votre lieu de résidence (encerclez les réponses qui s'appliquent):

- Quartier urbain
- Zone rurale
- Maison unifamiliale
- Un appartement
- Autre ( spécifiez)\_\_\_\_\_

19.- Décrivez la composition ethnique de votre communauté de résidence  
(encerclez votre réponse):

- A predominance afro-americaine
- A predominance blanche americaine
- A predominance d'origine haitienne
- Autre (spécifiez e.g. latino, asiatique,  
etc...)\_\_\_\_\_

20. Assistez-vous au culte? oui\_\_\_ non \_\_\_

Si oui, lequel (encerclez votre réponse)?

- Catholique
- Chretien
- Juif
- Adventiste du 7ieme Jour
- Autre (specifiez)\_\_\_\_\_

21.- Travaillez-vous aux Etats-Unis? oui\_\_\_ non \_\_\_

Si oui, quel genre d'emploi occupez-vous? \_\_\_\_\_

22.- Par le passe, avez-vous travaille aux Etats-Unis? oui\_\_\_ non\_\_\_\_\_

Si oui, que faisiez-vous comme emploi? \_\_\_\_\_

23.- Actuellement, quel est votre revenu annuel aux Etats Unis (encerclez votre réponse)?

- Moins de 10,0000
- 10,001-15,999
- 16,000- 20,999
- 21,000-25,999
- 26,00 -30,999
- 31,000- 35,999
- 40,000-45,999
- 50,000 +

24.- Dans quelle langue communiquiez-vous le plus souvent à la maison (encerclez votre reponse)?

- Seulement en Creole
- Seulement en Francais
- En Créole et en Français mais le plus souvent en Français
- En Français et en Créole mais le plus souvent en Créole
- En Créole et en Espagnol
- Autre, par exemple en anglais (spécifiez)\_\_\_\_\_

### **VOTRE VIE EN HAITI AVANT D'EMIGRER AUX ETATS-UNIS**

25.- Dans votre jeunesse en Haïti, viviez-vous (encerclez votre réponse)

- Dans une grande ville
- Dans une petite ville



- Dans une region rural
- Autre (un quartier près d'une ville, d'un village, etc.. spécifiez)

\_\_\_\_\_

26.- Dans votre jeunesse, quelle était la langue la plus parlée a la maison ?

(encerclez votre reponse)?

- Seulement le Creole
- Seulement le Francais
- Le Créole et le Français mais plutôt le Créole
- Le Français et le Créole mais plutôt le Français)
- Le Créole et l'Espagnol mais plutôt l'Espagnol)
- Autre\_\_\_\_\_

27.- Quelle langue préféreriez-vous parler? (encerclez votre réponse).

- Seulement le Creole
- Seulement le Français
- Le Créole et le Français (mais plutôt le Français)
- Le Français et le Créole (mais plutôt le Créole)
- Le Créole et l'Espagnol (mais plutôt l'Espagnol)
- Autre\_\_\_\_\_

28.- Etez-vous allé(e) a l'école en Haïti? Oui\_\_\_\_non\_\_\_\_

29.- Si oui, quel est le niveau le plus élève atteint (encerclez votre réponse) ?

- Primaire
- Secondaire

- Rhetor-Philos
- Ecole Normale Supérieure
- Université
- Autre (ex. PCB, Licence en Droit, Médecine  
etc....) \_\_\_\_\_

30.- L'enseignement se faisait-il en (encerclez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent)?

- Créole
- Français
- Espagnol
- autre \_\_\_\_\_

31.- Habitez-vous à la maison? oui \_\_\_ non \_\_\_

32.- Si oui, que faisiez-vous de votre temps  
libre? \_\_\_\_\_

33.- Travailliez-vous pour de l'argent? oui \_\_\_ non \_\_\_

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Interview Protocol: Semi Structured Questions**

The focus of this research is to explore how your experiences in Haiti influenced how you seek resources (how you seek help to meet your needs) in the United States. (These resources include medical help, religious support, education, housing needs, employment needs & social service resources). The intent is to also determine how your social network, your residential environment, your schooling, your behavior and your beliefs in Haiti impacted your ability to seek resources in the United States.

#### **DEFINING HELP-SEEKING**

1. How do you define a situation that requires seeking someone's help
2. What messages, if any did you receive about seeking help from others?
3. Were those messages received within or outside of your family?

#### **EXPERIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES**

1. May you tell me a bit about how you came to the United States?
2. Tell me a bit about your community in the United States? ( ethnic make-up, socioeconomic status)
3. Who do you live with
4. Is your community different than your initial community of arrival, if so may you tell me how?

#### **Discrimination/ Oppression**

5. Did you ever feel different because you were a Haitian immigrant? If so, may you tell me how?

6. Did you ever feel like you were treated differently in the United States because you were a Haitian immigrant? If so, may you tell me how?
7. Did you ever feel like you were treated differently by other Haitians in the United States? If so, may you tell me how?
8. Had you experienced being treated differently in Haiti by other Haitian, if so may you tell me how?
9. Have you ever felt treated differently by Americans? If so may you tell me how and by whom? ( immigration status, immigration rules, woman, man, skin color, Haitian, Language, Education, Residence, Income, behavior, people you know, your spiritual beliefs, your religious beliefs, employer, health facility, hospital, social services).
10. Do you feel that any of these factors affected the way you were treated in the United States as you attempted to seek help? If so, may you elaborate on its effect?
11. May you tell me what comes to mind when you hear the following terms:
  - Bourgeoisie ( What Haitians from lower SES refer to Haitians from higher SES)
  - People ( the mass)
  - abytan ( country folk),
  - Restavek ( typically women, sometimes children, who live with families and tend to the families basic needs, cleaning, cooking, shopping , in some instances child labor and exploitation)
  - mounmon ( people of the mountains)

### **Help-Seeking Experiences**

12. As a Haitian immigrant in the United States who did you turn to when you are upset or worried? ( financial, education, language, housing, medical, basic needs)
13. Has being an immigrant effected your ability to ask for help If so may you tell me how?
14. Did you ever turn to someone outside your family unit to address your problem (s), if so  
Where did you go? How did you learn about them?
15. How did you choose those specific individuals?
16. Did you ever seek resources from a government agency? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
17. If yes, tell me about your experience
18. Tell me about a time when you attempted to seek help and you were unable to.  
May you tell me what kept you from getting the help you needed?
19. If possible may you tell me how your experiences in Haiti prepared you for adjusting to life in the United States? Specifically in terms of seeking help in difficult times.

### **FOR THOSE WHO LIVED IN A COUNTRY OTHER THAN HAITI PRIOR TO ARRIVING IN THE UNITED STATES**

1. May you tell me a bit about how you emigrated to \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Tell me a bit about your community in\_\_\_\_\_? ( ethnic make-up, socioeconomic status)
3. Who did you live with?

### **Help-Seeking Experiences**

4. As a Haitian immigrant in the \_\_\_\_\_ who did you turn to when you had a problem? ( financial, education, language, housing, medical, basic needs)
5. Did you ever seek resources from a government resource (s)? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ if so tell me about your experience.
6. Tell me about a time when you attempted to seek help and you were unable to.  
May you tell me what kept you from getting the help you needed?
7. If possible may you tell me how your experiences in Haiti prepared you for adjusting to life in the\_\_\_\_\_?
8. If possible may you tell me how your experiences in \_\_\_\_\_ prepared you for your life in the United States and specifically your ability to seek help

### **HAITIAN SOCIAL CLASS FACTORS**

1. May you tell me a little about your educational background in Haiti ( type of school, language of instruction, length of education)
2. Did you pursue education in another country? If so, where and what did you study?
3. Has this education been helpful to you in Haiti and in the United States? If so may you tell me how?
4. If it has not been helpful, may you tell me why?
5. Did this education in any way impact how you seek help for yourself and your family both in Haiti and in the United States? If so may you tell me how?
6. What was your preferred language of communication at home? Has your language been helpful to you in the United States? If so may you tell me how?
7. If it has not been helpful may you tell me how?

## **HELP SEEKING EXPERIENCES IN HAITI**

1. When someone or something upsets you in Haiti, how were you taught to address the person/ situation?
2. Did you find these lessons helpful in the United States? If so, may you tell me how?
3. If you did not find them helpful, may you tell me what was not helpful?
4. In seeking help in Haiti, is it important to know people in order to get what you need? If so, how did you go about getting to know these individuals?
5. Did you feel that it was important to know people in the United States in order to get what you need? If so, may you tell me who you needed to know?
6. Did you ever seek resources from the Haitian government? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
7. If yes, may you tell me about your experience (s)?
8. If you did not may you tell me why?
9. Did you ever seek resources from an international organization (World Relief, Save the Children, UNICEF, and Religious Organizations)? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
10. If yes, may you tell me about your experience (s)
11. May you tell me if these experiences have had an effect on how you seek help in the United States?

## **PERSPECTIVE ON SEEKING SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES SINCE THE 2010 EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI**

1. In your opinion has Haiti's earthquake had an impact on how you now seek help in the United States?

2. In your opinion has Haiti's earthquake had an impact on how help is offered to you in the United?
3. In your opinion has the earthquake in Haiti changed your attitude about seeking help in the United States?
4. In your opinion has the earthquake in Haiti changed how much help your relatives and friends in Haiti receive?



## **APPENDIX F**

### **Protocol d'Entrevue Questions Semi-Structurees**

Le but principal de cette recherche est de connaître comment vos expériences vécues en Haïti ont pu influencer votre recherche de services d'aide (comment rencontrer vos besoins de base) aux Etats-Unis. (Les services disponibles comprennent les services médicaux, l'aide de votre communauté religieuse, les services de logement, les services éducatifs, les services d'emploi et les services sociaux). Il s'agit pour nous de mieux connaître comment votre réseau d'aide communautaire, résidentiel, environnemental, scolaire, et votre comportement et vos croyances en Haïti ont pu vous former dans votre recherche d'aide aux Etats-Unis.

### **VOTRE COMPREHENSION DE LA RECHERCHE D'AIDE OU D'ASSISTANCE SOCIALE**

4. D'après vous quelle situation vous pousserait à chercher de l'aide
5. Quels renseignements avez-vous reçus pour vous aider à trouver de l'aide?
6. Ces renseignements vous sont-ils parvenus de l'intérieur ou de l'extérieur de votre famille?

### **EXPERIENCES VECUES AUX ETATS-UNIS**

12. Pouvez-vous nous décrire un peu comment vous êtes arrive(e) aux Etats-Unis?
13. Décrivez-nous un peu votre communauté de résidence aux Etats-Unis?  
(composition ethnique, statut social, status économique)
14. Avec qui habitez-vous maintenant

15. Actuellement votre communauté de résidence est-elle différente de ce qu'elle était quand vous êtes arrivé(e) aux Etats-Unis. Si oui, pouvez-vous nous décrire la différence ?

**Discrimination/ Oppression**

16. Vous êtes-vous jamais senti(e) différent(e) parce que vous étiez d'origine Haïtienne? Si oui, pouvez-vous nous décrire comment ?
17. Avez-vous été traité(e) différemment des autres aux Etats-Unis parce que vous étiez d'origine Haïtienne ? Pouvez-vous nous donner des exemples pour illustrer comment vous avez été traité (e) différemment des autres aux Etats-Unis parce que vous étiez d'origine Haïtienne ?
18. Avez-vous jamais été traité(e) différemment par vos confrères/consœurs haïtiennes aux Etats-Unis parce que vous étiez d'origine Haïtienne ? Pouvez-vous nous dire comment ?
19. Aviez-vous été traité(e) différemment en Haïti par vos confrères ou consœurs haïtiennes. Si oui pouvez-vous nous dire comment ?
20. Avez-vous jamais senti(e) que vous avez été traité(e) différemment par vos Co-Américains? Si oui, pouvez-vous nous dire par qui et de quelle façon? (statut d'immigrant, règlements d'immigration, en tant qu'homme, en tant que femme, à cause de la couleur de votre peau, de votre origine haïtienne, de votre langue, éducation, résidence, revenu, de votre comportement, vos connaissances, vos valeurs spirituelles, vos croyances religieuses, par votre employeur, par les soins de santé, par l'hôpital, par les agences de services sociaux).

21. Croyez-vous que les facteurs énumérés ci-devant ont affecté la façon que vous avez été traité(e) aux Etats-Unis alors que vous cherchiez de l'aide? Si oui, pouvez-vous élaborer, donner plus de détails sur les effets sur vous de ce traitement?
22. Pouvez-vous nous dire ce qui vous vient à l'esprit quand vous entendez les mots suivants ; Comment les Haïtiens de classe sociale inférieure SES diffèrent de ceux de classe supérieure SES
- Bourgeoisie (classe élite)
  - Peupl (la masse)
  - abitan (les paysans),
  - Restavek (typiquement les enfants et quelques fois les femmes qui habitent avec des familles d'accueil présumant en échange d'une instruction quelconque et d'un logement et qui souvent sont responsables de voir aux soins de base de ces familles – c'est à dire de faire les courses, de nettoyer, de faire la cuisine, de s'occuper des jeunes enfants etc....souvent on réfère à leur statuts comme de l'exploitation surtout dans le cas des enfants restavek)
  - moun mon (gens des montagnes)

### **Expériences Vécues de la Recherche d'Aide**

20. En tant qu'immigrant Haïtien aux Etats Unis vers qui avez-vous l'habitude de vous confier ou de chercher de l'aide quand vous êtes inquiet ou en difficulté (financièrement, éducation, compréhension, logement, besoins médicaux, besoins de base)
21. Etre un immigrant a-t-il été une source de difficulté pour vous quand vous recherchez de l'aide, si oui, pourriez-vous nous décrire comment ?

22. Vous êtes-vous jamais adresse(e) à un étranger, membre autre que votre famille, pour obtenir de l'aide. Si oui, ou êtes-vous allé(e), auprès de qui avez-vous cherché de l'aide? Comment les avez-vous rencontrés ou eu connaissance d'eux ?
23. Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé (e) à vous tourner vers ces individus?
24. Avez-vous jamais cherché de l'aide auprès des agences gouvernementales ?
- Oui\_\_\_\_Non\_\_\_\_
25. Si oui, pouvez-vous nous raconter comment cela c'est passé ?
26. Racontez-moi une de vos expériences quand vous avez cherché de l'aide et que cela n'a pas marché. Pouvez-vous me dire pour quoi cela n'a pas marché?
- Si possible pouvez-vous me dire comment vos expériences en Haïti vous ont préparé (e) à affronter la vie aux États-Unis. Plus particulièrement comment ces expériences vous ont aidé (e) à vous débrouiller et trouver de l'aide dans les moments difficiles.

**POUR CEUX QUI AURAIENT HABITÉ UN PAYS AUTRE QU'HAÏTI  
AVANT D'ARRIVER AUX ÉTATS-UNIS**

- 1.- Pouvez-vous nous dire comment vous avez émigré  
en\_\_\_\_\_
- 2.-Racontez-moi un peu comment cela se passait la bas pour vous, votre communauté, son ethnicité, son statut socioéconomique \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.-Avec qui habitiez-vous?

### **Tentatives d'obtenir de l'aide**

- 4.- Comme immigrant(e) haïtien(ne) a \_\_\_\_\_ auprès de qui cherchiez-vous de l'aide ou du secours quand vous aviez un problème, une difficulté ?  
(financière éducation, de langue, logement, soin médical, besoins de base)
- 5.- Avez-vous jamais cherché de l'aide auprès d'une agence d'aide gouvernementale ? oui\_\_\_non\_\_\_Si oui, racontez-moi un peu votre expérience
- 6.- Dites moi si a aucun moment vous avez recherché de l'aide sans en recevoir.  
Savez-vous pourquoi vous n'avez pas pu recevoir l'aide que vous recherchiez ?
- 7.- Si possible pouvez-vous me dire comment votre vie et vos expériences en Haïti vous ont préparé (e) à vivre dans le pays de votre choix à cette époque\_\_\_\_\_
- 8.-Si possible pouvez-vous me dire comment votre vie et vos expériences dans ce pays de votre choix vous ont préparé (e) à vivre aux Etats-Unis et surtout à trouver de l'aide quand vous en aviez besoin ?

### **FACTEURS DELIMITANT LES CLASSES SOCIALES EN HAÏTI**

- 1.- Pouvez-vous me raconter un peu votre éducation reçue en Haïti (type d'école, langue d'instruction, durée de vos études) ?
- 2.- Etes-vous allé(e) à l'école ailleurs qu'en Haïti, dans un autre pays. Si oui, où et quelles études y avez-vous poursuivies?
- 3.- Les études que vous avez poursuivies vous ont-elles aidé(e) en Haïti et aux Etats-Unis Si oui, pouvez-vous nous expliquer comment ces études vous ont aidé?
- 4.- Si ces études ne vous ont été d'aucune utilité, pourriez-vous nous expliquer pourquoi ?

5.- Cette éducation reçue a-t-elle eu un impact négatif ou positif sur la façon que vous recherchez de l'aide pour vous-même ou pour les membres de votre famille et en Haïti et aux Etats-Unis? Si oui, pourriez-vous nous expliquer comment ?

6.- Quelle était votre langue de communication préférée à la maison? Votre langue parlée à la maison vous a-t-elle aidée quand vous êtes arrivée aux Etats-Unis ? Si oui, pouvez-vous nous dire comment ?

7.- Si non, pouvez-vous nous expliquer pourquoi?

### **VOTRE EXPERIENCE DE RECHERCHE D'AIDE EN HAITI**

1.- En Haïti, lorsque quelqu'un ou quelque chose vous cause des ennuis, comment vous a-t-on conseillé à résoudre vos difficultés avec la personne ou avec la situation

2.- Avez-vous trouvé ces conseils utiles une fois rendu(e) aux Etats-Unis. Si oui, pouvez-vous nous décrire quelques exemples.

3.- Si non, pouvez-vous nous dire pourquoi ces conseils ne vous ont pas servi(e)?

4.- Quand on recherche de l'aide en Haïti, est-il important de connaître des personnages "mounpa" pour obtenir satisfaction? Si oui, comment apprend-on à connaître ces personnages.

5.- Aviez-vous jamais pensé que c'était aussi important aux Etats-Unis de connaître de telles personnes afin d'obtenir ce que vous désiriez. Si oui, pourriez-vous nous dire le genre de personnage qu'il fallait connaître?

6.- Avez-vous jamais cherché de l'aide auprès des agences gouvernementales Haïtiennes ? Oui \_\_\_\_ Non \_\_\_\_

7.- Si oui, pouvez-vous nous raconter un peu votre expérience avec ces agences.

8.- Si non, pourriez-vous nous expliquer pourquoi vous n'avez pas obtenu satisfaction ?

9.- Avec vous jamais chercher de l'aide auprès des ONG internationales comme World Relief, Save the Children, UNICEF, and les Organisation Religieuses? Oui\_\_ Non\_\_

10.-Si oui, pouvez-vous nous décrire votre expérience ?

11.- Pouvez-vous nous dire si ces expériences on eu un effet positif sur la façon que vous entrevoyez la recherche de l'aide aux Etats-Unis ?

### **LES PERSPECTIVES DE TROUVER DE L'AIDE DEPUIS LE TREMBLEMENT DE TERRE DE 2010 EN HAÏTI**

5. Selon vous le tremblement de terre en Haïti a-t-il eu pour vous un impact sur la recherche et l'obtention d'aide aux Etats-Unis
6. Selon vous le tremblement de terre en Haïti a t'il modifié les offres d'aide que vous auriez reçues aux Etats-Unis
7. Selon vous le tremblement de terre en Haïti a t'il modifié votre attitude envers la recherche et l'obtention d'aide aux Etats-Unis
8. Selon vous le tremblement de terre en Haïti a-t-il changé la nature et le montant d'aide que vos parents et amis ont reçu en Haïti?

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